

**A SURVEY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES  
TOWARDS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE  
IN A SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK COMMUNITY**

by

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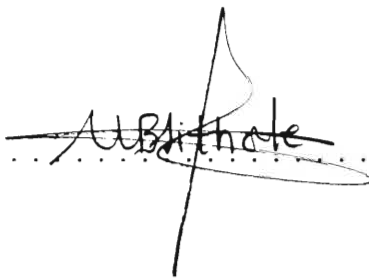
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January 1998

DECLARATION

I declare that the contents of this thesis, unless otherwise specified, represents my original work.

NJABULO BONGEKILE SITHOLE  .....

1998

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines primary school educators' attitudes towards the sexual abuse of children in a South African black community. The aims of this study are threefold: to assess educators' knowledge and attitudes towards, and management recommendations for child sexual abuse, to examine differences in the attitudes of male and female educators and lastly, to look at differences in opinions of different age groups of educators. A sample of 155 educators in the Edendale area was randomly selected. These schools fall under the ex-Department of Education and Training and are traditional African schools. Educators were asked to read a case vignette describing a child sexual abuse case. They were then asked to respond to a questionnaire divided into three categories - knowledge, attitudes and management recommendations. Educators were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the various statements. The data was analysed using means, frequencies and standard deviations for each statement. To examine the effects of age and gender, chi-square tests for independent samples were conducted per statement. *\* The study hoped to determine the level of knowledge.* Results showed that teachers have some knowledge in the area of child sexual abuse and were able to identify emotional and behavioural signs in the classroom, but that they had insufficient knowledge about the incestuous abuse of children. Results also indicated that teachers have a positive attitude towards intervention. Teachers agreed that a child needs to receive treatment from psychologists and that abuse should not be kept secret. In looking at significant differences in the gender of the educators, it appeared that more female teachers thought that young children are more traumatized by abuse than older children, and that more female teachers felt that a child should directly confront the perpetrator. Lastly, results showed that teachers know some procedures for dealing with abused children. In-service training was recommended as a means of helping teachers deal effectively with sexually abused children.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

International trends suggest that in recent years there have been an increasing number of reports of child sexual abuse. Such reports are found in articles in professional and lay literature, as well as the mass media (Bentovim, Elton, Hildebrand, Tranter & Vizard; 1988; Conte *et al.*, 1991; Clark & Clark, 1989). One of the tragic elements regarding the abuse of children is the lack of accurate data concerning the scope of the problem (Zirpoli, 1990).

The current situation in South Africa is no better. According to a study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the South African Police Services (SAP) over the period of 1994/1995, it was found that there has been a 60% rise in the reported number of child rape cases between July 1994 and June 1995. Crimes against children are increasing at a rate of almost 29% a year and it is reported that if this trend continued the CPU would be dealing with more than one million cases by 2000 (South Africa Survey 1996/1997). Hypotheses about the reasons for the increase include mandatory reporting, heightened professional awareness, media reports, child pornography and militant feminism, which may threaten the male who then turn to children. In 80% of cases the offender is someone with whom the child has had contact at some stage, in 30-50% of cases the offender is the parent surrogate. However, Collings (1991) maintains that regardless of the prevalence of the problem, most evidence indicates that the incidence and

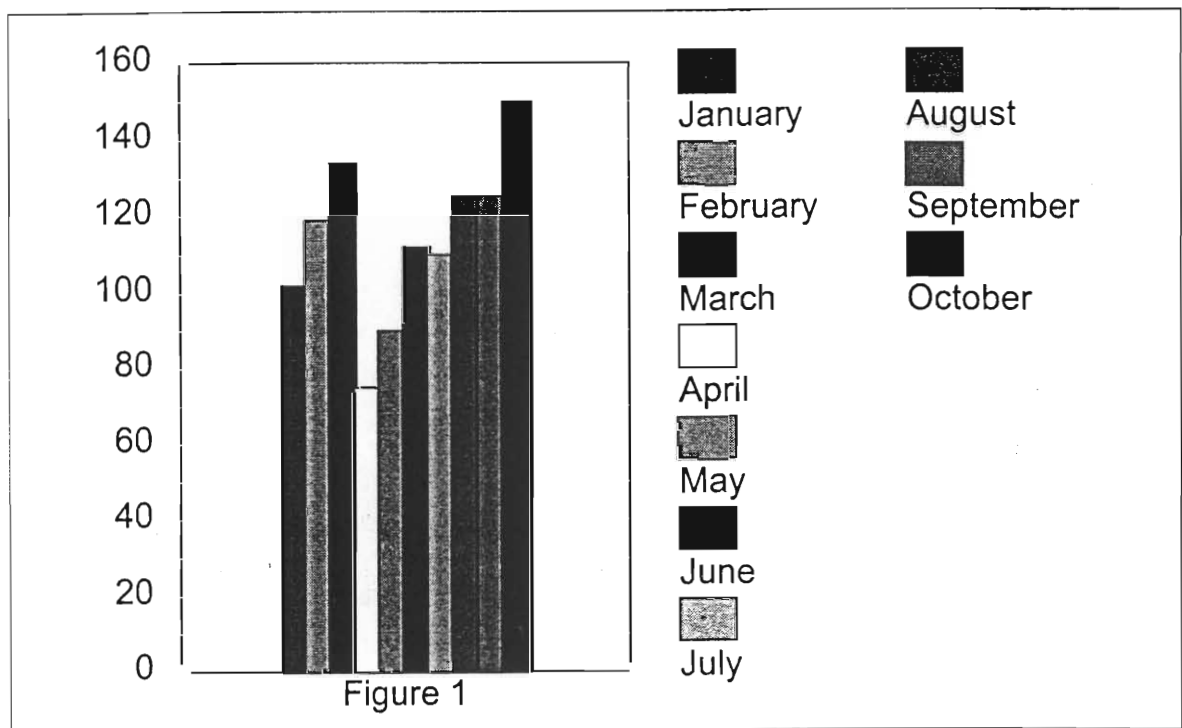
the severity of child sexual abuse is rising. It is important to keep in mind that these studies reflect reported cases only - much abuse remains unreported.

In the United States of America (USA) there has been a 20% increase in the incidence of reported sexual abuse of children since 1976. The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse estimates that one million American children are sexually abused each year (Clark & Clark, 1989). It is also estimated that 70% of sexual abusers are known to children before abuse takes place. Through research it has been discovered that abuse occurs in all social classes, with more reporting from the lower social economic classes (American Humane Association, cited in Clark & Clark, 1989; Gelles, 1987; Gil, 1979; Bentovim *et al.*, 1988).

✓ A study of the South African incidence rate by Willows (1988, cited in Collins, 1993), found that accurate statistics on child sexual abuse are not available, although the figure is estimated to be high. He further noted that reasons for the lack of information include resistance generated by the mythology surrounding the incest taboo and difficulties in separating sexual abuse from other forms of abuse. Furthermore, the size of the country and the remoteness of large areas preclude adequate coverage by health, welfare and educational professionals.

Lebowitz, Roth and Dye (1988) state that within the South African context many factors shatter the myth of childhood as a time of innocence, comfort and security. They point out that the problem of abuse of children must be viewed in the context of generally high levels of violent crime in South Africa. Statistics from the Child Protection Unit in the Gauteng province indicate that there has been an overwhelming increase in reported cases over the past

years. This is also a concern in the KwaZulu-Natal area. Statistics reported for the Pietermaritzburg area for January to October 1997, at the Child Protection Unit (CPU) demonstrate this trend (Captain Naick, Personal Communication, 27 November 1997). (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Sexual abuse cases reported in Pietermaritzburg area January to October 1997**

These statistics only reflect a small portion of cases as much abuse remains unreported. In a study done in Zimbabwe by Khan and Nyanungo (1997) the incidence of child abuse was found to be approximately three times higher than in other parts of the world. Trends indicate that with boys 55% of the abusers were women. Khan and Nyanungo (1997) report that there is an increasing number of cases where children are used as a 'cure' for Aids. This trend is

reportedly occurring in the South African situation in which children between the ages 5-12 are being targeted (Thamm, 1996).

These trends are a major cause for concern in South Africa. Services in black communities are notoriously poor, resulting in inadequate intervention and management of this situation. In order to begin to address this issue this study undertakes to investigate the knowledge base, the values or attitudes of male and female primary school educators towards child sexual abuse and their understanding of management. This group of professionals was focused on as they are often in the front-line of disclosure and of the management of sexually abused children in our local schools.

It is vital that this group of professionals be adequately equipped to deal with this responsibility. Little research has been done on the attitudes of black educators towards child sexual abuse. In order for appropriate in-service training programmes to be designed it <sup>and it</sup> seemed imperative to the author that existing attitudes first be explored.

### 1.1.2 Background to the study

In recent years child sexual abuse has captured widespread attention. There has been a large number of researchers addressing the incidence, effects, prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse (Sangster, 1988; Spies, 1994; Russell, 1993; Levett, 1989; Jacobs, 1988 & Collins, 1993). A concern raised is that sexual abuse is on the increase and treatment is problematic. This is due to fragmented services and approaches, various roles that families take in this issue, socio--cultural factors, lack of resources, socio-- economic problems, and the lack of knowledge about what needs to be done when these situations arise. In recent

years public awareness of child sexual abuse has been improved resulting in increased reporting. One need only page through the daily newspaper to realise that abuse of children is an ongoing and common crime. Yet despite our increased awareness and understanding of the dynamics of child sexual abuse, it still continues to be difficult to prevent and to curb the high rate at which it is occurring in the current social context.

✓ Within the South African black community child sexual abuse has been reported to have increased in frequency and severity since the late 1980s (Weideman, 1996; Cole, 1994; Winship, 1987). This period saw a rapid social change in the form of urbanisation. The urbanisation process has led to socio-economic problems such as increased unemployment, overcrowding, marital and interpersonal relationship problems and substance abuse (Jacobs, 1988; Gagnon, 1985). Little formal research has been done on what this community knows about child sexual abuse. ✓ For example, what should be done with perpetrators, what treatment would be appropriate and what preventative measures would be appropriate within their own cultural context.

Studies done abroad have investigated the attitudes of professionals with regard to sexual abuse. For example, studies by Conte *et al.* (1991); Saunders (1988) and Johnson, Owens, Dewey, & Eisenberg (1990) investigated the attitudes of doctors, nurses, lawyers and social workers. ✓ These studies reveal that professionals in developed countries do have an adequate knowledge base about sexual abuse. ✓ In addition, no significant differences were found between the attitudes of male and female professionals. However in a study by Carroll and Fromuth (1993) females saw the abuse experience resulting in more negative effects than did their male counterparts. ✓ Other researchers have looked at teachers attitudes, for instance

McIntyre (1990), Duffell (1990), Baxter and Beer (1990) and Abrahams, Casey & Daro (1992). These writers revealed inconsistencies between school policy and practice in the area. Locally we lack information about professionals' attitudes, especially within the black community. The viewpoints of the members of the cultural group are very important. A wider frame of reference based on an understanding of cultural values and beliefs must be maintained so that recommendations can be made within the broader context of human experience (Korbin, 1981; Matsumoto, 1994). Levett (1990) supports this notion and stresses that we need to develop an understanding of child sexual abuse which enables us to engage with the problem in ways that are appropriate to all diverse communities of South Africa. She recommends that we need to gather and evaluate information about various sets of beliefs and ideas in different communities.

Within the South African context where services are limited, the role of the educator becomes vital in the management of child sexual abuse. Research continually documents that sexual abuse can have detrimental effects on the well being of children and frequently requires psychological interventions (Collins, 1991; Scheepers, 1994; Sanderson, 1991; Finkelhor, 1984; Macfarlane, 1986; Seidner & Calhoun, 1984). Children in black schools are likely not to have access to specialised psychological services. Rundell (1995) points out that educators in South African black classrooms deal with large numbers and therefore these children may end up not being identified. If emotional problems are apparent these too may be overlooked.

In recent years a number of preventative programmes for use in schools have been developed to teach children about sexual abuse (Kelly, 1989; Jacobs, 1988; Clark & Clark, 1989; Wurtele, Saslawsky, Miller, & Britcher, 1988). These were based on the belief that schools



are in a better position to reach children who may be at risk of sexual abuse. Conte *et al.* (1991) reported that there are about 300 published programmes on child sexual abuse, dealing with victims, perpetrators, families and the community. In South Africa, Child Welfare's and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been running programmes on how to deal with child sexual abuse. Schools are approached by individuals and private agencies with offers of interventions. However, little is known about the effectiveness of these programmes in the local context, as they tend to be offered on an *ad hoc* basis. The Education Department has no specific policy in place. It cannot be over-stressed that if such interventions, aimed at a topic as sensitive as sexual abuse, are to be effectively integrated into an existing school programme, educators who have an informed attitude towards child sexual abuse would be essential. Little is known about whether individual educators share a belief that they should cooperate in cases of child sexual abuse. It seems vital that this issue be addressed in order that intervention programmes are pitched at the right level.

To date educators in traditionally black schools have been playing a limited role with regard to the reporting of child sexual abuse cases. Educators of young children are an essential part of the professional team that can prevent abuse and neglect. In the past, educators were not obliged by law to report suspected cases. However, the State now mandates that suspected child abuse be reported by professionals, including educators (*Child Care Act*, 1983). However, few formal steps were taken to ensure that educators had the knowledge to recognize sexually abused children and how to proceed from there.

✓ This study aims to look at educators' existing attitudes, their knowledge (i.e. what do they know about child sexual abuse and treatment) and what steps they would take in the

management process. Before elaborating on these aims, the question of the definition of child sexual abuse will be addressed.

## 1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 1.2.1 Problems with definitions

Korbin (1981) notes that definitions of sexual abuse vary from culture to culture and even within societal groups. Some groups engage in permissive practices or sexual rituals that would be viewed with alarm in other cultures (Khan & Nyanungo, 1997). Other groups consider western sexual norms to be inclusive and therefore conducive to victimisation. Despite these variations, all groups have rules governing sexual contact between children and adults. The incest taboo prohibiting intra familial sexual relations is almost universal.

Different authors give various definitions of sexual abuse. They also differ in the classification of the acts which constitute sexual abuse. For example, Clark and Clark (1989) classify the acts which constitute sexual abuse into three different categories: assault, incest and exploitation. Sexual assault is defined in the following way: the perpetrator is usually male and it is usually a single event in which a perpetrator forces himself on a child. The incident is usually traumatic and some physical evidence of, for example, blood and bruises will be present. Incest is defined as sexual intercourse between persons so closely related that they are forbidden by law to marry. This usually occurs over a long period of time and classically there is no evidence of trauma or active injury. They further states that the physical findings are subtle or non-existent unless there has been complete penile penetration over a long period of time. Sexual exploitation is defined generally as behaviour whereby an

adult gains sexual as well as financial advantages from a child who is cognitively incapable of judging or warding off such actions ( Cole, 1995; Clark & Clark, 1989).

On the other hand, Mrazek and Kempe (1981, cited in McDonogh, 1994) approach the problem of definition by delineating six factors necessary for a more comprehensive definition of sexual abuse. These are: the extent of the sexual contact, the developmental maturity of the child, the degree of relatedness between the perpetrator and the child victim, the affective nature of the relationship, the length of the relationship and age difference between the victim and the perpetrator.

A further problem with definition is attributable to the focus of different disciplines that show interest in this area. Finkelhor and Araji (1986, cited in Leach, 1993) state that one of the specific difficulties in addressing the subject of sexual abuse is that it does not fall within the domain of a particular discipline. Professionals approach the problem from fields such as social work, psychology, criminology, nursing, psychiatry and law.

### **1.2.2 Definitions of child sexual abuse**

Some of the difficulties in the search for an acceptable definition can be illustrated by examining different but overlapping approaches. Leach (1993) used three categories to highlight the problems in this area: the social, research and legal definitions. In the following paragraphs, a brief discussion of the various definitions from different disciplines is presented, taking into account the six factors suggested by Mrazek and Kempe (1981).

### 1.2.3 Social definitions of child sexual abuse

Several definitions are widely used in this area. Each of these will be looked at in turn. Clark and Clark (1989:163) define child sexual abuse as:

Contacts or interactions between a child and an adult when a child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person.

He further states that:

... abuse may be committed by a person under the age of 18 when that person is either significantly older than the victim or when the perpetrator is in a position of power or control over another child

This definition takes into account that the young can also be abusers. This definition also acknowledges the age difference between the victim and the perpetrator and the potential to use various positions of power and authority in order to manipulate a child into inappropriate sexual activity. However, the definition does not take into account the extent of the sexual contact, the affective nature of the relationship and the length of the relationship.

Monteleone (1996:12) defines sexual abuse as:

A sexual contact or interaction for sexual stimulation and gratification of the adult or older child who is a parent or caregiver and responsible for the child's care. Sexual activity would include sexual intercourse, sodomy or anal penetration, oral genital contact, fondling, masturbation, digital penetration or manipulation and exposure. The acts can be one sided or reciprocal, exposure can be the most difficult to define. Some families are comfortable with nudity in the home. They

share bathrooms, share bedrooms or live in small quarters where there is very little privacy. Exposure becomes sexual abuse when the person exposing is sexually aroused by the event and does it specifically for that purpose.

This definition covers a wide range of sexual activities and it also takes into account different view points about certain acts that could be seen as abuse in other settings. Both these definitions emphasize the abuse of power and the age differences between the abuser and the victim. They also accommodate the fact that abuse can have a wide range of actions and emphasize the betrayal of trust and responsibility.

Bobat and Killian (1986, cited in McDonogh, 1994:2) sum up the issues often dealt with by social scientists in the following way:

"... any act with sexual overtones, perpetrated by a needed and or trusted adult, whom the child is unable to refuse because of lack of age, lack of knowledge or the context of the relationship.

#### 1.2.4 Legal definitions

Van Dokkum (1995) states that there is no criminal offence labelled 'child abuse' or 'child sexual abuse'. Depending on the nature of the abuse, the alleged abuser can be charged with one or more of the following offenses: assault, assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, indecent assault, rape, incest, intercourse with a girl or boy under 14, an indecent act with a girl under 14 or a boy under 19 (*Sexual Offenses Act*, 1957), ill-treatment of a child by a parent, guardian or person having custody of the child (*Child Care Act*, 1983).

The law recognizes certain specific sexual behaviours against children. It also considers the age difference between the victim and the perpetrator. In contrast to the social definitions, where they are frequently concerned about age differences, the power relations and how the child interprets the act, the law does not consider the subjective aspects of the act. It is evident from the above that there may be problems in reaching consensus of what constitutes abusive behaviour between disciplines.

### 1.2.5 Definitions determined by cultural norms

Very few authors look at the cultural differences in child sexual abuse. In African society Tutu Mgulwa, president of the South African Stop Child Abuse Association (Sasca) has publicly suggested that child sexual abuse is bound up with the way some men see women and children as inferior human beings (*Drum*, 3 October 1996).

In a study done in Zimbabwe, the question of cultural norms raised a number of concerns.

✓ Khan and Nyanungo (1997) discovered that girls would not report cases of possible abuse as they believed that it was culturally acceptable (*Natal Witness*, 18 March 1997). The authors further state that there are a range of traditional practices that affect the reported incidence of abuse. ✓ For example, a practise called '*Chiramu*' which encourages an uncle to fondle the breasts and bottom of a young girl. This is meant to socialize the girl in preparation for marriage. ✓ They further report that girls in their sample were saying they were not in favour of this practise. This study highlights some controversial issues. ✓ What is justified in terms of cultural norms and the girls' subjective interpretation of the practice demonstrates that they perceive their rights to be violated.

Chinamasa, Zimbabwe's attorney-general (*Natal Witness*, 18 March 1997), emphasizes that people need to look at the cultural issues, as in some cases cultural practice has not only turned a blind eye to the rights of the children but has indeed glorified and given respectability to certain practices that could be viewed as abusive.

✓ Looking at cultural practise within the Zulu tradition, which is dominant in the area in which this study took place, one finds that traditionally it was normal for a child to walk around in a state of undress. This was a sign that one is still a virgin and should be proud of one's body. There is another traditional custom to prove that one is proud of one's body this is called *ukushikila*. Here a man would ask a woman to expose her buttocks, not for the intention of harassing, but in a sense of pride and admiration of her body. It was also common to observe one taking a bath in the river. It is against this background that some sexual acts are confusing. These customs may have had their place in the past when there was no widespread sexual abuse, and showing off her body gave a woman a fair chance to be recognized by men. If instances of rape and abuse follow from such instances, traditionally that was not accepted and perpetrators were heavily penalized. However, urbanisation has changed many aspects of these customs. Many rural patterns and tribal customs seem to have changed materially within the urban environment but remnants of traditional ways are still found. There are also strong tendencies to depart from the idea of authoritative patriarchal control in the communities, to thinking of the rights of women.

In conclusion, such issues confound attempts to define child sexual abuse in a universal way. ✓ It is the belief of the author that whatever issues are involved, it cannot be ignored that acts which betray trust, abuse power, the use of force or threat in the pursuit of sexual

gratification must involve an act of abuse. It is in this regard that attitudes are central to the arguments presented in this thesis. As can be seen from the above discussion, attitudes will vary from culture to culture, discipline to discipline and abuser to abused. In order to establish what is here referred to as 'attitudes', the following section will define this term as it is used in this study.

### 1.3 ATTITUDES

✓ People react and respond differently in thoughts, feelings and actions. Characteristics such as gender, age, personality, intelligence, social class and physical abilities may play a part in forming attitudes.

✓ Authors such as Cook (1979) and Locke and Latham (1990) define attitude as an overall internalised core disposition that guides one's thoughts, feelings and actions towards specific others and objects. It could also be a predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given situation or object.

Attitude is seen as being influenced by three factors: the individuals personal experience; a persons own emotional reaction towards a situation/object and lastly, the interactive process of a person forming an impression and the situation in which it is formed. The characteristics of objects being judged will also have an effect (Cook, 1979).

Attitude as defined above is a cognitive phenomena which has a strong affective component. For example when an educator decides that a student is aggressive, he or she may also become angry or frustrated in response to this situation (Cook, 1979). This may impact on



the manner in which the situation will be managed. The area of child sexual abuse is an emotive one and thus may lead to evoking very strong attitudinal responses.

In conclusion, the area of child sexual abuse presents practitioners with many new challenges.

That adults can be sexually attracted to and sexually active with children is both bewildering and overwhelming to many people. Yet the increasing and alarming number of instances of sexual abuse are being publicly recognized and the need for intervention at all levels is apparent. Previously held beliefs and attitudes are being challenged. A prerequisite for professionals, such as educators, who will need to play a vital role in the prevention and identification of sexual abuse, will be to deal with their own emotional reactions and attitudes. These feelings must be recognized and understood if the professional is to be successful in helping victims and those who are affected.

#### **1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to examine attitudes held by a group of educators towards issues relating to sexual abuse, existing knowledge about the subject, and how they would manage such situations.

#### **1.5 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter One has discussed the purpose of this study, the rationale behind this study, and defined the field of interest. Chapter Two will present the theoretical background to the study consisting of different theoretical underpinnings as relevant to educator education. Part II of

this chapter includes the effects of sexual abuse on children and adolescents. Part III covers preventative strategies for educators, discussing how they can help prevent abuse.

Chapter Three describes the research design, method of research, the sample and the instrument used. Chapter Four describes the results of the study. Chapter Five discusses and interprets the results. Finally Chapter Six deals with the implications, limitations and recommendations generated by the study.

Throughout the manuscript the author has employed the convention of using the feminine pronoun when referring to victims and the masculine pronoun when referring to offenders. However, the reader should not conclude that all victims are female or that all perpetrators are male.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will review some of the literature concerned with the causes and effects of child sexual abuse that have been researched to date. Prevention strategies will also be reviewed.

✓ This review will attempt to place into perspective past research and to draw out particular issues pertinent to the study. ✓ Two major theoretical perspectives which have had a major influence in the way in which sexual abuse is conceptualized will be presented. These are the psychodynamic and the socio-cultural views of child sexual abuse. This section examines the major features of each perspective and considers research findings.

#### 2.2 THE PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE

The psychodynamic perspective emphasizes the role of the specific psychopathology of the perpetrator, the victim and other family members in the aetiology of intra familial child sexual abuse. The family is viewed as a complex organization in which the intra psychic dynamics of each individual interact to contribute to the sexual abuse (Mrazek, 1981; cited in McDonogh, 1994). This view may be helpful in understanding abuse which occurs within families.

## 2.3 PERPETRATOR

A history of emotional deprivation, psychological disturbances, impaired sexual behaviour and a number of situational events may constitute dynamic factors in the initiation of child sexual abuse by the perpetrator.

### 2.3.1 History of emotional deprivation in perpetrators

Research has indicated that the perpetrator often has a history of emotional deprivation as well as ambivalence and/or negative relationships with parental figures in childhood (Meiselman, 1978; Meier, 1985). It is postulated that the absence or lack of parent figures may result in poor internalization of social norms and constraints that lead the perpetrator to disregard the incest taboo. Offenders may also have observed incest behaviour in their family of origin. Exposure to incest in the absence of due consequences may decrease the offenders inhibition to committing incest in his own family (Meiselman, 1978).

Adams-Tucker (1982) and Steele and Pollock (1974) (cited in Meier, 1985) all report that most assaultive parents had been assaulted as children. Meier (1985) however, found that only 50 % of the reported cases of child offenders were found to be seriously assaulted as children.

Other studies have suggested that perpetrators have a poor relationship with their fathers and prefer their mothers (De Young, 1982). It is proposed that the perpetrator may identify with his daughter in a sexual relationship in an attempt to gratify the original desire for a positive paternal relationship with his father (Meiselman, 1978). Furthermore, the offender may attempt to resolve the oedipal complex with mother through incestuous relations with the victim.

### **2.3.2 Psychological disturbance**

The literature has enumerated a range of psychological disturbances which may contribute to the onset and maintenance of child sexual abuse. These include impulse control disorder (Murphy, Haynes & Worley, 1991), character disorder (De Young, 1982), and paedophilia (Jehu, 1991). Other studies, for example, Valliant and Blasutti (1992) however, have found no particular psychological disturbance amongst incest offenders. Meier (1985) states that these individual differences are very difficult to test systematically and objectively since it is difficult to simulate the kinds of stressors which might precipitate loss of control.

### **2.3.3 Situational factors**

Finally, there are a number of situational factors which may precipitate the onset of an offence. These include stressful events which may decrease resistance to the commission of the incest offence. For example, marital estrangement, divorce, death of a family member, illness, or a period of unemployment (Mrazek, 1981; Bentovim *et al.*, 1988).

## **2.4 VICTIM**

Turning to the victim, the literature focuses on of the following issues: role reversal, sexual behaviour of the victim, age and relationship to the abuser. All these factors may constitute dynamic factors in the aetiology of child sexual abuse.

### **2.4.1 Role reversal**

The victim may assume the domestic responsibility in the home from an early age. The performance of maternal and spousal roles in the family may result in the displacement of the offenders sexual feelings to the child victim. Displacement is enhanced if the child victim appears physically similar to the mother and the role reversal of the mother/daughter has preceded the onset of the incest (De Young, 1982; Hooper, 1992; Sgroi, 1982). The pseudomature behaviour of the victim in combination with other factors, such as the incapacitation of the mother, may contribute to the onset of the abuse.

### **2.4.2 Sexual behaviour of the victim**

A number of studies have contended that promiscuous behaviour on the part of the victim prior to the onset of incest may influence the initiation of incest by the perpetrator (Mrazek, 1981). Promiscuity has been defined as the frequent sexual involvement of the victim with different partners (Meiselman, 1978). It is postulated that the offender may be aroused by the exploratory sexual behaviour of the victim and may extend sexual advances to the victim on the basis of the rationalisation that it may, for instance, curb the development of promiscuity (Weinberg, 1955 cited in Meiselman, 1978).

Other studies have contended, however, that promiscuous behaviour rarely occurs prior to the onset of incest (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986). It may rather be a behavioural way for the child to 'tell' on the adult or a counter phobic reaction on the part of the terrified child (De Young, 1984; Justice & Justice, 1976, cited in Meier, 1985). The proposition that children are victims of their own sexual behaviour is a dangerous one. Beliefs such as this may enable

professionals and society at large to fail to acknowledge the prevalence of sexual abuse, its resulting pain, and the damage it carries for children. Hall (1989) provides research in this area which gives us the testimony of incest survivors through personal accounts of incest survivor groups. Survivors challenge these beliefs. To say children are provocative may result in children being blamed for the abuse. The child may then feel guilty and confused. It ignores the threats and bribes which may be used by abusers to make children participate in the abuse. Adults are responsible for interpreting a children behaviour as provocative.

#### **2.4.3 The age of the child**

There is some evidence that the younger the child at the start of the abuse, the greater the consequences in adult life (Gil, 1988 cited in Hall, 1989). Such explanations for the occurrence and severity of long term consequences for victims should be used only as a guide since significant problems can and do result from a single incident of sexual abuse even by a more distant relative. What is clear however, is that being sexually abused as a child by a trusted adult does have a number of long term consequences for mental health and relationships in adult life. Evidence from research studies has enabled us to construct a picture of the common problems of adult survivors that is remarkably consistent, regardless of family background and severity of abuse. Some of the characteristics, for instance, include low self esteem, confusion, emotional reactions, depression, anxiety, anger, rage and social isolation. However, not all problems are present in every case and their severity varies from one person to the next. Bentovim *et al.* (1988) maintain that the extent of problems is in part related to the type and duration of abuse.

#### **2.4.4 Relationship to the abuser**

Greater damaging effects are reported following sexual abuse by a father or father figure (Russell, 1986). The effect of being abused by other family members may depend on the degree of trust in the relationship. It is also possible that abuse by a trusted neighbour or baby-sitter can be more damaging than abuse by a distant relative (Hall, 1989).

### **2.5 THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER**

The mother's absence, marital estrangement, psychological disturbance and other situational factors may play a role in the course of child sexual abuse.

#### **2.5.1 Absence or incapacitation**

The death of, or severe mental or physical illness of the mother, may influence the onset of incestuous behaviour. Reasons for the maternal absence or disability include substance dependence, depression, pregnancy or employment outside the home (Browning & Boatman, 1977 cited in Herman, 1981; Finkelhor & Baron, 1986).

#### **2.5.2 Marital estrangement**

A significant incidence of marital discord and sexual estrangement from the marital partner has been described in the literature. The sexual estrangement theory however, blames the mother for colluding through failure to fulfil the sexual needs and duties required by the spouse (Meiselman, 1978). Johnson (1992) argues that sexual dysfunction may be present in most marriages at some time and the result is not usually that of incest.



### 2.5.3 Psychological disturbance

A few studies have suggested that mothers in incestuous families may be personality disordered (Herman, 1981). Several clinicians have categorised the mother as a passive dependant personality (Herman, 1981; Mrazek, 1981; Salt, Myer, Coleman & Sauzier, 1990). It is unclear however, whether this personality profile is inherent or whether this style develops as a result of the helplessness consequent upon living with an abusive spouse.

### 2.5.4 Situational factors

A number of research studies have postulated that the failure of the mother to intervene in the abuse may be due to a variety of situational and relationship factors such as fear of family disruption, divorce or withdrawal of financial assistance, the threat of public outcry and the subsequent humiliation, the fear of violent retaliation by the spouse, blaming the child victim as a defence against self-recrimination and feeling divided between comforting and assisting the child and shielding the spouse from recrimination (Salt *et al.*, 1990). Nelson (1981) argues if an abused child manages to tell her mother that she has been sexually abused by a family member or other trusted adult, the mother's reaction is often one of loss. She has lost her view of herself as a partner, as a protective mother, and her relationship with her family will never be the same again. Hall (1989) argues that the consequences of this dynamic is that it removes responsibility for the abuse from the abuser and compounds guilt for the mother. Mothers find it hard to believe that their partner is an abuser. Mothers may also be abused by their partner. Some mothers know about the abuse and do nothing. Mothers may be threatened with violence if they disclose. Disclosure forces a mother to choose between her partner and her child. Some mothers also participate in the abuse.

The psychodynamic perspective does not contextualize the issue of child sexual abuse in relation to the socio--cultural context. It may therefore be useful to examine another perspective which attempts to look at the cultural issues surrounding sexual abuse.

## **2.6 SOCIO--CULTURAL FACTORS**

The role of social processes has received considerable attention in this area due to various hypotheses about the relationship between social interaction and sexual abuse. These include social acceptability, social attitudes toward women, low socio--economic status and cultural standards.

### **2.6.1 Cultural and socio--economic standards**

Early studies (Flugel, 1926, Guttmacher, 1951 cited in Hall, 1989) concluded that sexual abuse was more likely to occur in isolated communities, in families where there was a strong influence of alcohol, in working class families, in poor families, in families where men themselves were abused, or where women who were abused in childhood married abusers and became colluding mothers. These conclusions were challenged on the basis of the sampling methods used (Cavallin, 1966; Nelson, 1981; Forward & Buck 1988). It has subsequently been found that in every cultural or social context abuse is likely to occur. Abusers are doctors, policemen, secretaries, architects; they are heterosexuals, happily married, divorced, bisexuals and homosexuals.

### **2.6.2 Social acceptability**

A number of researchers/clinicians have written about male sexual aggression and its relationship to social processes (Clark and Lewis, 1977; Levett, 1990). They maintained that abuse is a social and not a natural phenomenon. They further state that certain social variables are associated with differing levels of sexual abuse. Most of these variables are related to the relative position of men and woman in societies. Brownmiller (1975) pointed out a number of social variables that have been positively correlated with abuse. These are an ideology of male toughness, an ideology of female inferiority and lack of power. He further argued that sexual abuse is simply the ultimate exercise of power by men over women. Feminists have long maintained that sexual intimidation served a role in maintaining social power relationships.

### **2.6.3 Social beliefs and attitudes**

Some of the beliefs in our societies may be indicative of tolerant attitudes and appear to blame the victim and minimize the consequences of sexual abuse. Past studies by, for example, Amir (1971), focused on the role of the victim, for instance, what she was wearing. Such misconceptions are damaging and dangerous.

There appears to be a considerable body of literature linking sexual aggression against woman to a number of social factors. The perception of women's roles in society and sex role ideology may be important determinants of the amount of sexual aggression demonstrated against women. The relationship between social attitudes and sexual aggression toward children has not been extensively examined.

Victim blame and negative attitudes towards children can also be seen among criminal justice officials who question the veracity of children's accusations as well as children complicity in sexual abuse (Stermac, Segal & Gillis, 1990). Stermac *et al.* (1990) found that all offender groups saw children as having some responsibility and deriving some benefit from sexual contact with an adult when the child did not actively resist and when the contact did not involve disrobing.

A study by Gilmartia-Zena (1987, cited in Stermac *et al.*, 1990) supported gender differences in the perception of sexual abuse. He found that males continued to endorse myths concerning women, suggestive dress, and saying 'no' when they mean to say 'yes' as causes of abuse. This may not necessarily apply to children but is suggestive of core beliefs in our society. Evidence of these attitudes raises the question of their prevalence amongst the general population and their effect upon the treatment of both victims and perpetrators.

*Reason for policy formation*

A growing concern in Africa is the 'urban legend' that sex with a virgin can cure Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (*Rape of the Innocent*, 1996). In addition, children are a 'safe' group with whom to have sex. Such myths which are prevalent in the black community may be contributing to the rising incidence of child sexual abuse in black communities.

## 2.7 THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

To understand why some individuals are more vulnerable than others to severity of trauma it is necessary to look at the influence of several factors. The age of the victim, the duration and frequency of the abuse, relationship to the abuser, the age of the perpetrator, the degree

of the sexual contact, type of abuse, the use of violence, whether or not the abuse was reported, and the parental reaction to the disclosure, are all thought to have an influence on the effects of abuse.

### **2.7.1 Age of the victim**

Perhaps the largest controversy in this area centres on age of onset as a factor in the impact of child sexual abuse. Some clinicians propose that the younger the child the more vulnerable he or she is to trauma due to impressionability (Stein, Golding, Siegel, Burnam & Sorensen, 1988 cited in McDonogh, 1994; Sanderson, 1990). Others suggest that the naivety of the younger child in some way protects them from severe effects (Sanderson, 1990). Meiselman (1978, cited in Sanderson, 1990), on the other hand, noted that the younger the age of the child the more seriously disturbed the victim is as an adult. Finkelhor (1979) and Russell (1986) found a small but not significant trend that showed that the younger the age of onset, the more severe the effects.

Some studies have found no correlation with age (Tufts New England Medical Center, 1984). Thus the relationship between age and severity of impact is not clear, although there seems to be a trend towards younger children being a little more severely affected by the trauma.

### **2.7.2 Duration and frequency of the abuse**

The duration and frequency of the abuse has also been correlated with the extent of the traumatic impact on the child. Duration refers to the length of time of the abuse. Frequency refers to the commonness of occurrence of the abuse.

Some studies, looking for an association between duration and frequency of abuse and severity of impact, found evidence for long term duration and increased trauma (Russell, 1986; Tsai & Wagner, 1978; Bagley, 1985; Friedrich, Uguiza & Beilke, 1986, cited in Sanderson, 1990). In contrast, other studies found no association between duration and severity of impact (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986). Even more intriguing, Courtois (1979) found that the longer the abuse lasted the less traumatisation occurred.

There is thus little consensus among researchers on the effects of duration and frequency of abuse on the severity of impact. Perhaps that is because there are a number of variables associated with this factor which may confound its investigation. These factors could include age of the child, age of the abuser, relationship to the abuser, and the nature of the sexual activity. It is argued that, rather than looking at one isolated factor as being predictive, it is the combination of a number of variables which influence the child, that need to be considered.

### **2.7.3 Gender of the perpetrator**

A small number of research studies have demonstrated that the gender of the perpetrator may have an effect on the impact of the abuse. Browne and Finkelhor (1986) cite two studies by Russell (1986) and Finkelhor (1984) which suggest that sexual abuse by a male perpetrator is more traumatic than that by a female. Findings however, are inconclusive (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986). In addition, Seidner and Calhoun (1984) found that survivors who experienced sexual abuse by a male abuser displayed lower self acceptance but higher social maturity. It is likely that abuse by females is still relatively under-reported as is abuse directed at male children, which may account for a bias in these findings.

#### **2.7.4 Age of the abuser**

The age of the abuser has also been associated with impact. Finkelhor (1979) and Fromuth (1983) (cited in Sanderson, 1990) found that the older the abuser, the more traumatic the impact on the victim. Russell's (1986) data are inconsistent with this finding. His subjects reported lower levels of trauma if the abuser was younger than 26, or older than 50. Browne and Finkelhor (1986, cited in McDonogh, 1994) conclude from a review of the available literature that the younger the offender the less severe the traumatic impact of the abuse. However the findings remain inconclusive.

#### **2.7.5 Relationship to abuser**

Russell (1983) and Finkelhor (1979) found that greater trauma was associated with father or stepfather abuse compared to other types of abusers. Bagley (1985) also reported that there was a trend for abuse by natural fathers to have a more severe impact than abuse by stepfathers. Tufts (1984) on the other hand, found that children abused by their stepfathers manifested more distress than if the abuser was the natural father. Anderson (1981) and Friedrich, Urquiza, & Beilke (1986) reported more trauma when the relationship was between close relatives. Hoagwood (1990, cited in McDonogh, 1994) commented on the high rate of current estimates of sexual abuse perpetrated by non-family members and suggested that while the long term effects of incestuous abuse are severe, the effects of abuse perpetrated by non relatives also warrants attention.

Other studies, such as Finkelhor (1979, cited in Browne and Finkelhor, 1986) and Peters (1988) comparing subjects abused by family members and non relatives demonstrate no

significant discrepancy in negative effects. Findings regarding the degree of affiliation between the offender and the victim and its effects on the victim are therefore inconclusive. It is interesting to note that the incest offender may create new sexual relationships with unrelated children. Any children within his sphere of authority may thus be at risk once the pattern is established. The incest offender may be attracted to a child who is a close family friend or a devoted student (Meier 1985).

#### **2.7.6 Type of sexual contact**

Empirical evidence suggests that there is an association between severity and degree of trauma and type of sexual activity. Russell (1986) found that 59% of survivors who experienced attempted or actual intercourse, fellatio, cunnilingus and anal intercourse reported severe traumatisation, compared to 36% who experienced digital exploration and touching of genitals and unclothed parts of the body and 22% who were subject to unwanted kissing.

Bagley (1985) report that the one single variable predicting severity was penetration. Other studies concur with this finding, although they are not quite so clearly differentiated between actual intercourse and genital touching ( Peters, 1988; Seidner and Calhoun, 1984; Tufts, 1984). Other studies report no consistent relationship between type of sexual activity and degree of trauma (Anderson, 1981; Finkelhor, 1979; Fromuth, 1983).

In conclusion, evidence is inconclusive as to whether more intimate contact, in particular penetration, is more traumatic than manual exploration and contact. Sanderson (1990)



maintains that it is perhaps the psychological meaning that the abuse has for the child and the related trauma which exert an influence on severity of trauma.

### 2.7.7 Physical force and violence

Finkelhor (1979) and Fromuth (1983) found that the more force that was used the more negative the outcome. Russell (1986), Tufts (1984) and Friedrich *et al.* (1986) found that survivors subjected to force during the abuse rated themselves as extremely traumatised compared to those who did not experience force.

However, a number of studies contradict the association between physical coercion during sexual abuse and negative outcome (Anderson, 1981; Seidner & Calhoun, 1984).

In conclusion it would seem that there is some relationship between force and violence and severity of trauma in child sexual abuse but research findings are inconclusive.

### 2.7.8 Time of disclosure

Researchers have postulated that if sexual abuse is kept secret and not disclosed until adulthood the degree of traumatising will be more severe. Bagley (1985) did a study in this area and a fragile association was found. However, when other factors were taken into account a non significant relationship was exhibited. Finkelhor (1979) found no such relationship at all. Tufts (1984) found that those children who took a long time to disclose displayed least anxiety and hostility.

It is clear that the motivation to report the abuse is associated with many variables which must be accounted for in any attempt to evaluate the impact of the abuse on the victim.

### **2.7.9 Parental reaction to disclosure**

Tufts (1984) notes that mothers who were angry and punitive generated more traumatic impact. Anderson (1981) found that symptoms were two-and-a-half times worse if the parental response was negative. This suggests that negative responses aggravate trauma, although positive responses do not necessarily ameliorate trauma. Institutional responses from statutory agencies, social workers and the police may also play a role in impact, as may removal of the child from the home. Tufts (1984) found an increase in behavioural problems, in particular aggression, when the child was removed from the parental home.

*Summary*

In conclusion, one has to consider a number of factors that come into play in determining the impact of abuse. Review of the empirical literature demonstrated no consistent association between these factors and the outcome of the abuse. A number of studies demonstrated consistent relationship between increased duration and frequency of the abuse and greater negative effects on the child victim. In addition, child sexual abuse perpetrated by a father or stepfather was associated with more significant detrimental effects as well as abuse perpetrated with the use of force or violence. Negative parental reaction to the disclosure of the abuse, as well as removal of the victim from the home environment was also shown to be associated with subsequent negative effects on the victim. Ambiguous findings were demonstrated for factors such as the age of onset, the degree of sexual contact and whether or not the abuse was disclosed. Overall, every case is unique and requires special consideration. The next section examines issues pertaining to prevention.

## 2.8 PREVENTION

Over the years there has been an increasing professional concern with issues relating to the prevention of child sexual abuse. This concern is reflected in the development of a number of prevention programmes which have been designed to teach children primary prevention concepts. These prevention programmes are available in a number of formats such as printed material, dramatised presentations, television programmes, structured discussion groups and so on. Some researchers have found that such programmes are an effective means of improving children's knowledge about sexual abuse prevention strategies (Wurtele *et al.*, 1986).

### 2.8.1 Child sexual abuse programmes

To effectively address the issue of child sexual abuse, various approaches have been implemented. Most researchers agree that prevention is better than cure. As a result many prevention programmes were started. Some looked at increasing self esteem, parenting skills and empowerment. Some focused at primary education, information giving, children's books, films, puppet shows and talks by well known personalities. Youth leadership programmes were also developed. These programmes targeted youth. The hope was that youth is open to new ideas. It was also based on the hope that one youth would listen to another. Currently all these programs are directed towards school age children. The context of such programmes often have the following cornerstones: 'bad touching', 'tell another trusted adult' and 'saying no'.

- (a) **Bad touching:** Most programmes tend to familiarize children with the concept of sexual abuse by defining 'bad' behaviours or situations. For instance, children are taught how to recognize bad touching and are given simple techniques to use should they encounter such situations.
- (b) **Tell someone:** Children are also taught that someone will always listen. They are encouraged to tell another trusted adult about the abuse. For instance, many programmes use the phrase, 'if you don't feel good about it come tell right away'.
- (c) **Saying no:** Children are taught various methods of resistance, including verbal refusal (saying no), running away and even martial art techniques (Clark & Clark, 1989).

Looking critically at such programmes, several issues are raised. Finkelhor (1986) maintains that defiance or resistance may provoke more serious coercion or force in a situation where a child has been taught 'no blind obedience to others' or 'say no'. Another problem is that of responsibility. Who is responsible for the abuse - is it the child who should be responsible or the adult? By focusing too much on the child one might create the impression that the child is at fault if the abuse occurs. In the South African context, traditional norms of respect and obedience are strong. Children are socialised to respect adults. These are difficult socialization processes for children to overcome. In addition, power differences come into play. Adults are physically bigger. Psychologically they can easily convince children. Adults also control desired resources, for instance, poverty-stricken children are at risk for abuse.

Programmes assume children can disclose, but guilt, shame, family loyalty, deprivation, fear of the consequences to themselves (for instance being removed for placement), may inhibit

them. Teaching children that sexual touching is bad may have unwanted effects. The concern is raised as to what implications this has for future sexual functioning. Some programmes may create a false sense of security. This is because programmes stress that if one discloses one will feel better, or someone will always listen. One should note that people's responses to disclosure are not the same. Disclosure may, in fact, begin a process of secondary abuse.

The problem of prevention is complex. Ideally, responsibility for protection should be placed on adults. Teaching life-skills throughout education may be a solution to the problems raised. If protective behaviour is taught it should stress adult responsibility. Programmes must acknowledge 'saying no' is not always possible.

In summary, children need to know that telling may be difficult. Adult responses are not always predictable. Sexual feelings are not always bad. Educators of such programmes should be trained in the management of disclosure.

Research suggests that there are no marked differences in the strategies employed by intra-or extra-familial abusers in their attempt to maintain the child's cooperation. Threats of rejection or attempts to define the abuse as a special secret emerged as the most frequently employed strategies (Collins, 1993). These findings are consistent with the results obtained in clinical studies (Berliner & Conte, 1992) in suggesting that the process of childhood sexual abuse involves three overlapping processes, sexualization of the relationship, justification of the abuse and the maintenance of the child's cooperation.

These studies point to some of the difficulties facing prevention programmes. It is one thing, for example, to teach children the distinction between good and bad touching but the situation becomes a lot more complex when one appreciates that many abusers employ good touching as a strategy to draw children into a special relationship, which is then transformed through a process of gradual approximation into an abusive relationship. It is, in fact, doubtful whether many children, particularly younger children, are able to discern the exact moment in such a process at which appropriate adult attention is transformed into abusive contact. Further, in cases where the child does define their experience as abusive, threats of emotional rejection or fears of betraying a special relationship are likely to constitute particularly powerful effective barriers to reporting.

The process of victimization in child sexual abuse is thus clearly a lot more complex than is suggested in much of the prevention literature. While prevention messages (for instance, 'say no' and 'tell') are likely to serve a limited preventative function, they may not achieve their goal.

There have been a few well designed studies of the effectiveness of these programmes (Binder & McNiel 1987; Kleemeier, Webb, Hazzard, & Pohl, 1988; Trudell & Whatley, 1988, cited in Collins, 1993) which all expressed concerns that prevention programmes might even have harmful effects such as blaming the child, applying an overly simple solution to a complex social problem, or provoking unnecessary anxiety among children. Moreover, Berliner and Conte (1990) have pointed out that prevention programmes tend to be based on common sense assumptions about the victimization process which might not accurately reflect the process whereby offenders target potential victims, engage children in sexual relationship and

maintain their involvement. There is no doubt that prevention programmes in their current form need to be re-evaluated. Broader based life-skill training may be a more appropriate option.

## **2.9 SUMMARY**

Research on perpetrator characteristics reveal that some perpetrators may have had a history of emotional deprivation, some a range of psychological disturbance and others exposed to other situational factors. No general characteristics are clearly linked to abusers.

Looking at the effects of the abuse, a number of factors determine the psychological sequelae of sexual abuse in the child, including the nature of the sexual activity, its frequency of occurrence, the use of force, the age and developmental status of the child, the relationship between the child and the perpetrator, and the family's reaction. Incest victims tend to suffer more, they blame themselves following disclosure. They may have impaired sexual relationships later in life. Although some claim that sexual abuse is not necessarily harmful to children, knowledge to date suggests that this argument lacks validity. It is important to keep all these factors in mind when assessing the effects of the abuse. Research findings in each category are inconclusive.

Literature on the role of the mother suggest that marital estrangement, psychological disturbance and other situational factors may play a role. Some theorists advocate that putting the blame on the mother shifts the responsibility from the offender.

Research in the area of socio--cultural factors reveal that abuse is common in all societies. Emphasis is also placed on contextualizing the understanding of this issue in relation to socio--cultural variables.

Finally, prevention programmes are available but need to be critically evaluated. The use of such programmes may lead to more harm than good. In a culture in which obedience to authority figures is highly valued, such programmes may be inappropriate. The study to be presented in Chapter Three attempts to investigate the attitudes of educators to the issue of child abuse in a first step towards a preventative model for use in South African schools.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 OBJECTIVES

This study aims to describe the knowledge and attitudes of educators' about child sexual abuse and its management. The study is based upon Conte *et al.*'s (1991) investigation into professionals' attitudes towards child sexual abuse. In this study descriptive aspects of the knowledge, attitudes and management recommendations of educators will be investigated.

Gender and age were treated as independent variables.

The aims of this study were thus threefold:

1. To describe African educators' knowledge base, attitudes and management recommendations for child sexual abuse.
2. To determine whether male and female educators differed significantly in their knowledge of what constitutes child sexual abuse, their attitudes towards child sexual abuse, as well as the management of the abused child.
3. To determine whether educators' knowledge, attitudes towards, and ideas as to how child sexual abuse ought to be managed, differed as the function of their age grouping.

Conte *et al.*'s (1991) questionnaire was adapted to achieve these aims.

## 3.2 METHOD OF ADAPTATION

Conte *et al.*'s (1991) study was designed for doctors, nurses and social workers who would come into contact with cases of child sexual abuse. The questionnaire looked at knowledge and values (See Appendix A). Statements in the knowledge category were judged by Conte *et al.* (1991) to have sufficient empirical evidence to be refutable. Based on available evidence, all knowledge statements were false. Disagreement with the statement would thus be the appropriate response. The values category was made up of those statements judged to have no right or wrong answer but rather being reflective of the respondents attitudes or values. The questionnaire developed for this study contained a case summary, a knowledge category, a values category and a category on management (see Appendix B for adapted questionnaire).

Statements from the original study were adapted to fit the South African context. Language used in the original questionnaire was inappropriate for the present study and adaptations were made.

### 3.2.1 Knowledge

Questions in the 'knowledge' related items were adapted in terms of language usage and complexity.

#### 3.2.2.1 Language

Language needed to be simplified and statements needed more detailed explanation. For example terms such as '**incest offenders**', needed further explanation (those who sexually abuse their own children), terms such as '**psychotherapy**' were changed to **seeing a**

**psychologist**, **apologised** changed to **confessed**, and **disclosure** changed to **reporting**. For the purposes of the present study, incest was not the main object of study but sexual abuse in general. Terms such as '**Incest or sexual offenders**' was changed to **perpetrators**. Throughout the questionnaire for '**incest victims**' terms such as **victim of sexual abuse** were used.

### 3.2.1.2 Complexity

Statements 2 and 3 from the original questionnaire were omitted. It was felt that they were too complex for the present study and they would require a strong knowledge base of child sexual abuse. The phrase, 'Adults who have sex with children are either fixated or regressed offenders' was considered to be a psychological term, with which educators may not be familiar. The second statement, 'Adults who have sex with children have a common or typical psychological profile' required direct involvement, in-depth information and more experience in the area of child sexual abuse. Educators may not have worked consistently with cases of child sexual abuse. Consequently statements from educators' workshops on prevention of child sexual abuse were used. This was done to tap into what information they would have been exposed to. Statements relating to observable signs of possible sexual abuse were used instead. For instance, statements 3 and 4 look at the ~~observable~~ behavioural signs such as aggression, attention seeking, hyperactivity and disruption. Statement 4 relates to the area of emotions such as poor self image, headaches, stealing, wetting, soiling, seductive behaviour and mood swings.

Statement 7 on the knowledge category was added: 'The child is seductive and often responsible for arousal, if it happened the child was asking for it'. This is a common

argument implying that some children often initiate and are therefore responsible for the abuse. It was thought important to examine educators' knowledge in this area. This item was treated as refutable as an act of abuse of authority and dependency and cannot be regarded as true consent (Bentovim *et al.*, 1988).

### 3.3 VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Turning to the values and attitudes category, some content of the questionnaire was changed from Conte *et al.*'s (1991) study to fit the present study. Value questions relating to management were added. For example, in the original questionnaire statement 11 reads, 'Once an incest father has apologised for the abuse, his daughter should never be allowed to bring the abuse up because she is likely to use it as a weapon against the family'. This was changed to 'Once **the perpetrator** has apologised for, **or confessed** to the abuse, the child should **never** be allowed to bring the abuse up **in discussion**'. This allows the educators to respond to a broader range of contexts.

Statement 13 in the original questionnaire looks at disclosure. It reads: 'Once incest is disclosed, it is unlikely to happen again'. This was changed to 'If the child wants the abuse to remain secret, it should not be reported'. The information about whether educators value reporting child sexual abuse or not is important as all professionals are obliged to report any suspected abuse. In addition, a team approach has been suggested as best by many writers (Howitt, 1992; White, Snyder, Bourne, & Newberger, 1989; Hallett & Stevenson, 1980). Various professionals can contribute different views on this subject. It was felt that it would be important to hear the wishes of educators on this issue.

Another example where content was changed is in statement 14. In the original questionnaire the content was 'Removal of victims or offenders is more traumatic than keeping the family together.' This was changed to: 'If the perpetrator is a family member the child should not be allowed to return home.' This question addresses one of the most controversial issues in the South African context. Decision making on this subject is a difficult one due to family structures and lack of resources for child placement. Educators might be consulted by other professionals involved with a case to suggest solutions based on the information that they have (*Children Act 1983*). For management purposes it would be interesting to get their opinions on the issue.

Statement 15: 'Perpetrators of child sexual abuse need to be prosecuted in the legal system', and statement 16: 'Perpetrators need treatment by a psychologist' were added, based on the current practice in the various organisations and services for sexual offenders. These questions were added to obtain more information about what educators value - the curative approach, 'treatment by a psychologist' or the punitive approach, 'prosecuted in the legal system'. Educators are members of the broader community and what they value could shed some light on what the community wants.

### **3.4 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Conte *et al.* (1991) investigated how the relationship of the offender to the child can be a factor frequently used to make decisions about treatment recommendations. Eight recommendations were made for intervention: individual therapy, victim; group therapy, victim; family group therapy, offender; individual therapy, offender; group therapy, offender; behavioural treatment, offender; home monitoring, and mother daughter counselling. For the

purposes of the present study the above recommendations were inappropriate for the educators. Educators do not have much information about the different therapeutic interventions in the case of child sexual abuse. Adaptations were made based on the current practice within schools. Thus the eight recommendations were: telling other educators, counsel the child, report to professionals, report to police, do nothing, confront the perpetrator, report to parents, or keep as a secret.

The first part of the questionnaire contains a case summary. This was done so that any educator who may not have dealt with a child sexual abuse case could identify with the situation. This case described a child who discloses to the educator that a person caressed her or his body on many occasions, rubbing his or her chest and genitals and forced him or her to perform oral sex. His or her academic performance is at a standard level although less than expected for a child as bright as he or she is. This was a vignette of 55 words describing specific types of touching. Aspects of the effects of abuse which are often seen in child cases were also included. For the questionnaire a five point scale was used, starting from strongly agree (1), agree (2), uncertain (3), disagree (4) and to strongly disagree (5). Educators were required to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement.

After the questionnaire was adapted a pilot study was done. This aimed to eliminate ambiguity in terms of language and also to record the duration of time needed to complete the questionnaire. Six educators were randomly selected by principals to help with the study. This group was made up of two males and four females. The educators were briefed about the purpose of the study and were asked to complete the questionnaire. They were then given

the opportunity to comment on the questionnaire. No language problems were identified but an ambiguous instruction was. This instruction was rephrased to gain clarity.

In its final form the questionnaire contained a series of 25 statements divided into three categories. The first was degree of knowledge (statements 1 to 7), the second was values and attitudes (statements 8 to 20) and the final category was management recommendations (statements 20 to 25). (See appendix B).

### **3.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

Ten schools situated in the Edendale valley were selected for this survey. Each school has approximately 20 educators. These schools previously fell under the Department of Education and Training, thus making them traditionally African schools. The potential pool of subjects was 155 educators. An appointment was made with each principal whereby the researcher was given an hour to speak about the research project. As it was exam time it was not possible to speak to all the educators at the same time. A educator representative was selected by educators. In most schools it was the educator who showed interest in the area of guidance and counselling. It should be noted that in these primary schools there are no guidance educators. A meeting with these representatives was held, and as far as possible the nature and purpose of the study was explained. Any feelings related to the sensitivity of the issue were explored. Support was also provided for educators if required. They were also given a chance to ask questions about the research. The researcher went through the questionnaire with the educators. The abbreviations that were used were explained. For instance SOUTH AFRICA: stands for strongly agree, A: agree, UN: uncertain, D: disagree and SD: strongly disagree. To protect confidentiality no names were required from the subjects. They were

required to indicate responses with an X. Biographical information included age, gender, years of teaching experience, and name of school. Educators were encouraged to answer as truthfully as possible and it was stressed that there were no right or wrong answers but, more importantly, they were asked to choose the number that best described their feelings.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION**

Two hundred questionnaires were handed out. The educators present at the meeting were responsible for administration. For each school the researcher and the educator in charge set a date on which the questionnaires would be returned. Each school was given questionnaires according to the number of staff members. All questionnaires were presented in an unsealed envelope. This was done so that they were returned in the envelope and sealed. Educators administering the questionnaire were asked to ensure that questionnaires and all statements were completed. This procedure was followed in all the schools.

### **3.7 PROBLEMS WITH DATA COLLECTION**

Due to exams questionnaires were not returned in time. The educator administrators complained that educators did not cooperate. In a number of cases questionnaires were returned with incomplete information. In two schools principals were responsible for giving out the questionnaires. In these schools questionnaires were returned on time.

### **3.8 SUBJECTS**

Educators' age-spread was assigned to one of three categories: below and equal to 36 years, 37-48 years and 49 and above. In the below 36 group there were 44 respondents, 68 respondents in the 37-48 age group, and the 49 and above group was represented by 35



respondents. One hundred and fifty five questionnaires were returned, but 18 were unusable due to the fact that some scores were missing. Some educators did not indicate their ages. Although confidentiality was assured, it appeared that some people were not comfortable about revealing their ages. These questionnaires were excluded from the age analysis.

With reference to the spread of participants in terms of gender, there were 115 females and 25 males. Again some information was missing in the questionnaires. In total there were 140 participants with appropriate information for the gender analysis.

### 3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

For the purposes of data analysis average responses were reported 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree. Strongly agree (1) and agree (2) were collapsed into one category of agree, and strongly disagree (5) and disagree (4) were collapsed into one category of disagree. Scores of 3 were recorded as uncertain. Mean scores were based on these collapsed categories. Using frequencies, means and standard deviations the degree of knowledge, attitude and management statements were analysed. Statements about the educators' level of knowledge were analysed individually as some statements had to fall into the agree category to indicate knowledge. In this study all statements except for 3 and 4 were regarded as false. The neutral category, uncertain (3), was taken as those who were not sure and therefore were placed in the no knowledge score. In the values and attitudes category each statement was scored individually. High scores in the agree categories represented more value or desirable, low scores in the disagree categories represented less value. In the recommendations category a high score in each statement represented what they would do to manage the problem that, is the desirability of the recommendation.

To examine the effects of gender and age, chi-square tests for independent samples were conducted for each statement. In the case of gender, the independent samples were males and females. For age, the three age categories, namely below and equal to 36 years, 37-48 years and 49 and above, were independent variables. The chi-square test was chosen as the data consisted of respondents indicating the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with certain statements (i.e., categorical data). A 0.05 level of significance was chosen for all analyses. It is important to note that a family-wise error might have been committed due to the number of analyses that were conducted. Because of the number of analyses that were performed on the same data set, this increases the probability of finding significant results by chance alone. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that although the number of response categories were reduced from 5 to 3, to make chi-square analyses permissible in terms of sample size, there nevertheless remained a few statements with more than 20% of the expected frequencies being less than 5. Results for these statements should be interpreted with caution.

### **3.10 RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

In order to determine the reliability (internal consistency) of the translated version of the questionnaire, Cronbach's *alpha*, were computed for the entire questionnaire, and by scale. The reliability of the entire questionnaire was 0.60. The 'knowledge', 'values' and 'management' scales yielded internal consistency coefficients of 0.48, 0.48 and 0.41 respectively. Therefore one could say that the questionnaire is moderately reliable (i.e., internally consistent).

Results of these analyses are reported in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Questions in the knowledge, values and management categories were examined. The independent variables of gender and age were also examined. Means and standard deviations of each statement were calculated. Table 1 looks at the knowledge category with means and standard deviations.

**Table 1: Frequencies, means and standard deviations of educators' agreements with knowledge statements**

	Agree	%	Un	%	Dis	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Almost all adults who have sex with their children were themselves abused as children.	45	31.0	37	26.0	63	43.0	3.248	1.714
2. Very few incest offenders (i.e., those who sexually abuse their own children) have sex with children to whom they are not related.	54	37.0	41	28.1	51	34.9	2.959	1.701
3. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit one or more of these behavioural symptoms aggression, attention seeking, hyperactivity and disruption.	95	64.6	25	17.0	27	18.4	2.075	1.575
4. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit features of emotional/psychological instability such as poor self image headaches, stealing, wetting soiling, seductive behaviour and mood swings.	122	83.6	12	8.2	12	8.2	1.493	1.188
5. Young children are more traumatized by abuse than older children.	115	81.0	11	7.7	16	11.3	1.606	1.326

	Agree	%	Un	%	Dis	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
6. Children who are abused by their fathers are at less risk for psychosocial problems than children abused by strangers.	26	18.1	28	19.4	90	62.5	3.889	1.565
7. The child is seductive and often responsible for arousal, if it happened the child was asking for it.	12	8.3	53	36.8	79	54.9	3.931	1.294

*Statement 1* is false, so one would expect most educators to disagree with the statement, thus leading to higher mean scores and as such mean score is 3.248. This shows that educators have knowledge of this statement. *Statement 2* is false, and again one would expect educators to disagree with the statement leading to higher mean scores; mean score for this statement is 2.959. This shows that educators have no knowledge of this statement. *Statements 3 and 4* are true and educators are expected to agree, thus leading to lower mean scores, so the mean score for statement 3 is 2.075 and for statement 4 is 1.493. This indicates that educators have knowledge of these statements. *Statement 5* is false, this means that educators are expected to disagree with the statement, thus leading to higher mean scores; a mean score of 1.606 was found. This shows that educators have no knowledge of this statement. *Statement 6* is false, thus the mean score should be higher; a mean score of 3.889 was found. This tells us that educators have knowledge of this statement. *Statement 7* is false, and the expected mean should be higher which would indicate that they have knowledge of the statement; a mean of 3.931 was found.

**Table 2: Frequencies, means and standard deviations of educators' agreements with value statements**

	Agree	%	Un-certain	%	Dis.	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
8. The most essential goal of victim treatment is to help victims express the feelings they have about victimization.	106	73.1	25	17.2	14	9.7	1.731	1.308
9. The mothers of victims of sexual abuse should apologize to their children for failure to protect.	50	34.7	33	22.9	61	42.4	3.153	1.755
10. All victims of sexual abuse need treatment by a psychologist.	128	88.9	6	4.2	10	6.9	1.361	1.075
11. Once the perpetrator has apologized or confessed for the abuse the child should never be allowed to bring up the abuse in the discussion.	36	25.4	26	18.3	80	56.3	3.620	1.704
12. In determining that a child has been sexually abused, it is a good idea to have the child directly confront the perpetrator.	29	20.3	29	20.3	85	59.4	3.783	1.610
13. If the child wants the abuse to remain secret it should not be reported.	24	16.7	24	16.7	96	66.7	4.000	1.533
14. If the perpetrator is a family member the child should not be allowed to return home.	40	28.0	31	21.7	72	50.3	3.448	1.718
15. Perpetrators need to be prosecuted in the legal system.	123	85.4	3	2.1	18	12.5	1.542	1.343
16. Perpetrators need treatment by a psychologist.	100	69.0	18	12.4	27	18.6	1.993	1.583
17. Testifying in court is always going to be traumatic for children.	103	71.0	27	18.6	15	10.3	1.786	1.339

**Statement 8:** most educators would be expected to agree, thus lowering the mean score; the mean of 1.731 was found in this statement. **Statement 9:** educators are expected to disagree thus leading to higher mean scores. Mean in this statement is 3.153. **Statement 10:** educators were expected to agree, thus lowering the mean; in this case the mean score is 1.361. **Statement 11:** educators are expected to disagree, leading to higher mean scores; the mean for this statement was 3.620. **Statement 12:** educators are expected to disagree with the statement, thus leading to higher mean scores; a mean score of 3.783 was found. **Statement 13:** educators were expected to disagree thus leading to higher mean score; a mean score 4.000 was found. **Statement 14:** educators were expected to disagree thus leading to higher mean scores; a mean of 3.448 was found in this statement. **Statement 15:** educators were expected to agree, thus leading to lower mean scores; a mean for this statement was 1.542. Looking at the next **statement 16**, educators are expected to agree, thus lowering the mean; a mean of 1.993 was found. In **Statement 17**, educators were expected to agree, thus lowering the mean; the mean for this statement was 1.786.

**Table 3:       Frequencies, means and standard deviations of educators’ agreements with treatment recommendations statements**

	Agree	%	Uncertain	%	Dis.	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
18. Tell other educators.	67	49.3	15	11.0	54	39.7	2.809	1.884
19. Counsel the child	116	85.2	10	7.4	10	7.4	1.441	1.134
20. Report to professionals	119	87.5	6	4.4	11	8.1	1.412	1.145
21. Report to police	99	73.4	23	17.0	13	9.6	1.726	1.307
22. Do nothing	3	2.3	3	2.3	127	95.4	4.865	0.660
23. Confront the perpetrator	29	21.8	34	25.6	70	52.6	3.617	1.618
24. Report to parents	115	85.2	10	7.4	10	7.4	1.444	1.137
25. Keep as a secret	19	13.9	7	5.1	111	81.0	4.343	1.416

**Statement 18:** mean score is 2.809 and the educators were expected to agree, thus lowering the mean. Therefore more educators fell on the desirable side. **Statement 19:** educators were expected to agree; a mean score of 1.441 was found. **Statement 20:** educators were expected to agree; a mean score of 1.412 was found. **Statement 21:** educators were expected to agree, thus lowering the mean score; a mean of 1.726 was found. This shows that they were in favour of the statement. **Statement 22:** educators were expected to disagree; a mean score of 4.865 was found. This means that more educators strongly disagree with the statement. **Statement 23:** educators were expected to disagree, thus leading to higher mean score. In this statement a mean of 3.617 was found. **Statement 24:** educators were expected to agree, thus lowering the mean score. In this case a mean of 1.137 found. Looking at **statement 25**, educators were expected to disagree, thus leading to higher mean score; a mean of 4.343 was found. This means that educators were against the statement.

**Table 4: Chi-square of educators' agreements with knowledge statements by gender**

	FEMALES			MALES			x <sup>2</sup>	df	p
	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis			
1. Almost all adults who have sex with their children were themselves abused as children.	36	29	49	8	7	11	0.02481	2	0.98767
2. Very few incest offenders (i.e those who sexually abuse their own children) have sex with children to whom they are not related.	45	31	39	8	9	9	0.83594	2	0.65838
3. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit one or more of these behavioural symptoms such as aggression, attention seeking, hyperactivity and disruption.	77	18	21	16	6	4	0.88334	2	0.64296
4. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit features of emotional / psychological instability such as poor self image headaches, stealing, wetting soiling, seductive behaviour and mood swings.	96	10	9	21	2	3	.38723	2	0.82397
5. Young children are more traumatized by abuse than older children.	96	5	12	14	6	4	12.80449	2	0.00166*
6. Children who are abused by their fathers are at less risk for psychosocial problems than children abused by strangers.	22	22	69	4	5	17	0.25296	2	0.88119
7. The child is seductive and often responsible for arousal, if it happened the child was asking for it.	10	44	59	2	8	16	0.75052	2	0.68711

Note. Un = uncertain; Dis = disagree.

\*  $p < 0.005$



**Statement 5** was significant which means that males and females differed on this statement. The desirable score is strongly disagree and males were more on the desirable side than females. The rest of the statements were not significant. This significance is probably due to the greater number of males who are uncertain, as compare to females.

**Table 5: Chi-square of educators' agreements with value statements by gender**

	FEMALES			MALES			$\chi^2$	df	p
	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis			
8. The most essential goal of victim treatment is to help victims express the feelings they have about victimization.	84	17	13	17	8	1	4.39243	2	0.11122
9. The mothers of victims of sexual abuse should apologize to their children for failure to protect.	38	26	49	11	6	9	0.83933	2	0.65727
10. All victims of sexual abuse need treatment by a psychologist.	101	4	8	22	2	2	0.90960	2	0.63457
11. Once the perpetrator apologized or confessed for the abuse the child should never be allowed to bring up the abuse in the discussion.	30	20	61	6	5	15	0.17052	2	0.91827
12. In determining that a child has been sexually abused, it is a good idea to have the child directly confront the perpetrator.	26	18	68	2	11	13	9.83029	2	0.00733*
13. If the child wants the abuse to remain secret it should not be reported.	18	16	79	5	8	13	4.78271	2	0.09151
14. If the perpetrator is a family member the child should not be allowed to return home.	32	24	56	7	4	15	0.64288	2	0.72510
15. Perpetrators need to be prosecuted in the legal system.	94	3	16	24	0	2	1.58067	2	0.45383
16. Perpetrators need treatment by a psychologist.	79	13	22	18	4	4	0.45096	2	0.79813
17. Testifying in court is always going to be traumatic for children.	81	18	15	18	8	0	5.98907	2	0.05006

Note. Un = uncertain; Dis = disagree.

\*  $p < 0.05$

**Statement 12** was the only significant statement, and the balance were not significant. This means that there is a gender difference in response to this statement. The desirable score is strongly disagree, and more females were on the desirable side as compared to males.

**Table 6: Chi-square of educators' agreements with treatment recommendations statements by gender**

	FEMALES			MALES					
	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis	$\chi^2$	df	p
18. Tell other educators.	55	10	42	11	3	10	0.34597	2	0.84115
19. Counsel the child	94	6	7	18	3	3	2.64572	2	0.26637
20. Report to professionals	92	5	9	24	1	0	2.33902	2	0.31052
21. Report to police	79	16	11	16	7	1	3.17364	2	0.20458
22. Do nothing	3	3	97	0	0	25	1.52793	2	0.46582
23. Confront the perpetrator	21	25	58	7	6	11	1.08251	2	0.58202
24. Report to parents	90	7	9	21	3	1	1.30800	2	0.51996
25. Keep as a secret	13	5	89	6	1	18	2.30969	2	0.31511

There were no significant statements in this category.

In Table 7 which follows, **Statement 3** was significant. The rest was not significant. The desirable score is strongly agree and the age group between 36 and 48 was on the desirable side.

In Table 8 there were no significant statements, and the same applies to Table 9 below.

**Table 7: Chi-square of educators' agreements with knowledge statements by age**

	1 ( $\leq 36$ )			2 (37-48)			3 (49-above)			$\chi^2$	df	p
	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis			
1. Almost all adults who have sex with their children were themselves abused as children.	16	8	19	20	22	25	9	7	19	5.03874	4	0.28335
2. Very few incest offenders (i.e., those who sexually abuse their own children) have sex with children to whom they are not related.	16	12	16	26	19	22	12	10	13	0.30775	4	4.98931
3. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit one or more of these behavioural symptoms such as aggression, attention seeking, hyperactivity and disruption.	30	7		51	10	7	14	8	13	14.72529	4	0.00531*
4. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit features of emotional/psychological instability such as poor self-image, headaches, stealing, wetting, soiling, seductive behaviour and mood swings.	40	3	1	59	4	5	23	5	6	9.32765	4	4.05341
5. Young children are more traumatized by abuse than older children.	32	5	6	55	4	6	28	2	4	2.06628	4	44.72357
6. Children who are abused by their fathers are at less risk for psychosocial problems than children abused by strangers.	8	2	33	13	17	38	5	9	19	9.16316	4	44.05715
7. The child is seductive and often responsible for arousal, if it happened the child was asking for it.	0	17	25	9	23	36	3	13	18	6.04249	4	44.19600

Note. Un = uncertain; Dis = disagree.

\*  $p < 0.005$

**Table 8: Chi-square of educators' agreements with value statements by age**

	1 (≤ 35)			2 (37-48)			3 (49 and above)			X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis			
8. The most essential goal of victim treatment is to help victims express the feelings they have about victimization.	34	5	4	50	13	5	22	7	5	2.96181	4	0.56424
9. The mothers of victims of sexual abuse should apologize to their children for failure to protect.	15	10	18	24	16	28	11	7	15	0.179824	4	0.99619
10. All victims of sexual abuse need treatment by a psychologist.	39	2	2	62	2	4	27	2	4	2.50447	4	0.64384
11. Once the perpetrator apologized or confessed for the abuse the child should never be allowed to bring up the abuse in the discussion.	10	9	24	15	11	41	11	6	15	2.42112	4	0.65881
12. In determining that a child has been sexually abused, it is a good idea to have the child directly confront the perpetrator.	10	13	20	12	10	46	7	6	19	5.61911	4	0.22946
13. If the child wants the abuse to remain secret it should not be reported.	6	7	30	11	14	42	7	3	24	2.78347	4	0.59469
14. If the perpetrator is a family member the child should not be allowed to return home.	13	8	21	19	12	36	8	11	15	3.15230	4	0.53267
15. Perpetrators need to be prosecuted in the legal system.	38	0	5	58	2	8	27	1	5	1.61337	4	0.80639
16. Perpetrators need treatment by a psychologist.	26	7	10	49	9	10	25	2	7	3.49693	4	0.47835
17. Testifying in court is always going to be traumatic for children.	34	6	3	45	13	10	24	8	2	3.94592	4	0.41337

**Table 9: Chi-square of educators' agreements with treatment recommendations statements age**

	1 ( $\leq 36$ )			2 (37-48)			3 (49-above)			$\chi^2$	df	p
	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis	Agree	Un	Dis			
18. Tell other educators.	25	4	13	29	7	26	13	4	15	2.91545	4	0.57207
19. Counsel the child	36	4	2	53	5	5	27	1	3	1.67968	4	0.79441
20. Report to professionals	37	2	2	58	3	4	24	1	5	3.90838	4	0.41855
21. Report to police	28	10	3	49	9	5	22	4	5	4.00258	4	0.40566
22. Do nothing	0	2	39	2	1	60	1	0	28	3.37688	4	0.49684
23. Confront the perpetrator	11	12	18	15	13	36	3	9	16	4.37805	4	0.35725
24. Report to parents	37	4	1	54	4	7	24	2	2	2.89802	4	0.57503
25. Keep as a secret	5	0	36	8	4	53	6	3	22	4.99111	4	0.28821

There were no significant statements.

**Table 10: One sample chi-square test to determine teachers' endorsement of the three response categories (Total sample):  
Knowledge category**

	N	(Residuals)	N	(Residuals)	N	(Residuals)	$\chi^2$	df	p
1. Almost all adults who have sex with their children were themselves abused as children.	45	(-4.67)	38	(-11.67)	66	(11.33)	8.5	2	0.014*
2. Very few incest offenders (i.e. those who sexually abuse their own children) have sex with children to whom they are not related.	55	(5)	43	(-7)	52	(2)	1.56	2	0.458
3. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit one or more of these behavioural symptoms such as aggression, attention seeking, hyperactivity and disruption.	99	(48.67)	25	(-25.33)	27	(-25.33)	70.6	2	0.000**
4. Children who have been abused exhibit features of emotional / psychological instability such as poor self image headaches, stealing, wetting soiling, seductive behaviour and mood swings.	126	(76)	12	(-38)	12	(-38)	173.28	2	0.000**
5. Young children are more traumatized by abuse than older children.	118	(69.33)	11	(-37.67)	17	(-31.67)	148.5	2	0.000**
6. Children who are abused by their fathers are at less risk for psychosocial problems than children abused by strangers.	26	(-23.33)	28	(-21.33)	94	(44.67)	60.7	2	0.000**
7. The child is seductive and often responsible for arousal, if it happened the child was asking for it.	12	(-37.33)	54	(4.67)	82	(32.67)	50.324	2	0.000**

Note: Critical value for the residuals for  $\alpha=0.05$  (two tailed) = 1.96

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p = 0.000$

Table 10 shows educators' responses in the knowledge category and their significance. **Statement 1** was significant at  $p=0.014$ , which means that educators have knowledge of the statement. Looking at **Statement 2**, educators' knowledge seems to be weak in this statement. A chi-square value of 1.56 was found ( $p>0.05$ ). **Statement 3** was significant, and this shows that educators have knowledge of this statement. **Statement 4** was also significant ( $p=0.000$ ), indicating educators' knowledge in this area. Looking at **Statement 5**, a significant value of 0.000 was found. Again this shows knowledge of this statement. In **Statement 6**, educators showed knowledge of this statement, a significant value of 0.000 was found. Educators' responses in **Statement 7** indicated knowledge. Again this statement was significant.

**Table 11: One sample chi-square to determine educators' endorsement of the three response categories (Total sample): Values category**

	AGREE		UNCERTAIN		DISAGREE		x <sup>2</sup>	df	p
	N	(Residuals)	N	(Residuals)	N	(Residuals)			
8. The most essential goal of victim treatment is to help victims express the feelings they have about victimization.	110	(60.33)	25	(-24.67)	14	(-24.67)	111.154	2	0.000*
9. The mothers of victims of sexual abuse should apologize to their children for failure to protect.	52	(2.67)	9	(-15.33)	62	(12.67)	8.162	2	0.017
10. All victims of sexual abuse need treatment by a psychologist.	132	(82.67)	6	(-43.33)	10	(-3)	207.9	2	0.000**
11. Once the perpetrator apologized or confessed for the abuse the child should never be allowed to bring up the abuse in the discussion.	36	(-12.67)	26	(-22.67)	84	(35.33)	39.507	2	0.000**
12. In determining that a child has been sexually abused, it is a good idea to have the child directly confront the perpetrator.	30	(-19.00)	29	(-20.00)	88	(39.00)	46.571	2	0.000**
14. If the perpetrator is a family member the child should not be allowed to return home.	41	(-8.00)	33	(-16.00)	73	(24.00)	18.286	2	0.000**
15. Perpetrators need to be prosecuted in the legal system.	126	(76.67)	3	(-46.33)	19	(-30.33)	181.311	2	0.000**
16. Perpetrators need treatment by a psychologist.	104	(54.33)	18	(-31.67)	27	(-22.67)	89.973	2	0.000**
17. Testifying in court is always going to be traumatic for children.	106	(56.33)	28	(-21.67)	15	(-34.67)	97.544	2	0.000**

Note: Critical value for the residuals for  $p=0.05$  (two tailed) = 1.96

\*\*  $p = 0.000$ ; \*  $p = < 0.05$



Table 11 presents educators' responses in the values category and the statements level of significance. **Statement 8** was significant; this means that most educators were in favour of this statement. For **Statement 9**, significance value was  $p = 0.017$ , which is weak, although significant at the  $p = 0.05$  level. **Statement 10** was significant, indicating that educators were in favour of the statement. **Statement 11** was significant. This means that most educators disagreed with the statement and were thus not in favour of this statement. **Statement 13** was significant, most educators disagreed with the statement, thus showing less value for the statement. **Statement 14** was significant, most educators disagreed with the statement, therefore showing less value for this statement. **Statement 15** was significant, most teachers agreed with the statement, thus showing more value for the statement. **Statement 16** showed significance, largely educators agreed with this statement, meaning that they are in favour of the statement. **Statement 17** was significant, educators agreed with the statement, thus showing value for the statement.

**Table 12: One sample chi-square test to determine educators' endorsement of the three response categories (Total sample):**  
**Management category**

	AGREE		UNCERTAIN		DISAGREE		x <sup>2</sup>	df	p
	N	(Residuals)	N	(Residuals)	N	(Residuals)			
18. Tell other educators.	68	(21.67)	16	(-30.33)	55	(8.67)	31.612	2	0.000**
19. Counsel the child	118	(71.33)	12	(-34.67)	10	(-36.67)	163.600	2	0.000**
20. Report to professionals	122	(75.67)	6	(-40.33)	11	(-35.33)	185.626	2	0.000**
21. Report to police	102	(55.67)	23	(-23.33)	14	(-32.33)	101.194	2	0.000**
22. Do nothing	3	(-42.33)	3	(-42.33)	130	(84.67)	237.191	2	0.000**
23. Confront the perpetrator	30	(-15.67)	35	(-10.67)	72	(26.33)	23.051	2	0.000**
24. Report to parents	119	(72.67)	10	(-36.33)	10	(-36.33)	170.950	2	0.000**
25. Keep as a secret	19	(-28.00)	7	(-40.00)	115	(68.00)	149.106	2	0.000**

Note: Critical value for the residuals for p=0.05 (two tailed) - 1.96

\*\* p = 0.000; \* P<0.05

Table 12 presents educators' responses in the management category and their significance. *Statement 18* was significant, most educators agreed with the recommendation. *Statement 19* was also significant, results show that educators agreed with the recommendation. *Statement 20* was significant, educators' responses showed agreement with the statement. *Statement 21* was significant, results showed agreement with the statement. *Statement 21* was significant, largely educators agreed. *Statement 22* results show that educators disagreed with the recommendation therefore value of .000 was found. *Statement 23* was significant, responses show that most educators disagree with the statement. *Statement 24* was also significant thus most educators were in favour of this recommendation. *Statement 25* was significant, most educators disagreed with the statement.

Overall, results show that teachers have knowledge in most areas in the subject of child sexual abuse, but lack information in other areas. Educators also seem to have an informed attitude. In the area of management, educators appear to know what is required of them. Very few respondents deviated from the rest of the sample.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Several points should be kept in mind when discussing the implications of these results.

- 1) Age and teaching experience were combined into one variable. It would seem logical that younger educators have fewer years of teaching experience.
- 2) From the sample very few male subjects were available in the schools. Most primary school educators are females.
- 3) The data was collected in the Edendale area. It is not appropriate to generalize responses of these educators to all educators in black schools.

All of the above factors will probably have a bearing on the results obtained in this research and as such must be borne in mind when interpreting the results.

5.2 CATEGORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Statement 1: ‘Almost all adults who have sex with children were themselves abused a children’

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
31 %	26 %	43 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Current empirical evidence refutes this statement. There are many factors that play a role. For instance, impulse control disorder (Murphy *et al.*, 1991), character disorder (De young, 1982). Meier (1985) reported that in 50 % of his cases the abusive parent was abused in their childhood. Meiselman (1978) talks about the negative relationships with parental figures in

their childhood. Clearly this shows that there is no one set of variables for the offenders. Similarly, Conte *et al.*, (1991) found that there is no consistent psychological profile or set of characteristics which discriminate between sexual offenders and others. In this study this statement was significant ( $p = 0.014$ ), which means that teachers have knowledge in this area.

Looking at the percentages, there seems to be some variation to the extent to which respondents correctly responded to this knowledge question. About 43%, that is a relatively high proportion of the sample, disagreed with this statement which means that some educators have little knowledge, however 31% agreed and 26% were uncertain. Looking at the 31% that agreed and the 26% who were uncertain, one could conclude that half the sample have no knowledge about this statement. Reasons for this could be that the statement seems to excuse the perpetrator and agreement would seem to vindicate the perpetrator. It also suggests that perpetrators have some psychological reasons. The implication is one of mitigating circumstances.

Presently the black community views the issue of child sexual abuse as a serious social issue. Many feel that drastic steps should be taken against perpetrators. An incident reported in the daily newspaper ('Kidnappers stoned by villagers', 1997) relates how villagers executed two people who allegedly kidnapped and abused a child. Coming back to the results, it could be that responses to this statement did not necessarily reflect knowledge or no knowledge but rather negative feelings towards the perpetrator. On the other hand, the statement itself could be more confusing for educators in a sense that they may know cases of parent abusers who were abused in their childhood. There were no significant gender differences and nor were there any significant age differences. However it is important to note that the age group, 36-48 had 25 respondents who disagreed with this statement. This means that they had more knowledge. This is the highest score when compared with the other groups. It could be that most of the educators in this age group have had more experience in this area.

**Statement 2: ‘Very few incest offenders have sex with children to whom they are not related’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
37%	28.1 %	34.9%

Age: not significant  
 Gender: not significant

The literature refutes this statement, which means that incest offenders will still commit other crimes outside their homes (Meier, 1985). Meier further states that they can be attracted to close friends and devoted students. This is also supported by Bentovim *et al.* (1988) who states that many of the men who abuse in the family, have, or have attempted to, make advances to several children, either within or without the family. However it is also important to bear in mind what Meiselman (1978) stated, that individual differences are important in all cases. This statement requires somebody with a background in child sexual abuse issues. It is interesting to note that 37% agreed; in addition 28.1% were uncertain, which is an indication that not enough knowledge is available about incest and only 34.9% disagreed. In terms of significance, a value of  $p=0.458$  was found, supporting the finding that educators’ knowledge in this area seems to be weak. Looking at the statement itself, one can respond to purely on a common-sense basis. The phrase ‘incest offenders’ was further explained as ‘those who sexually abuse their own children’. Therefore a simple answer to this could be a ‘yes’. This could explain the 37% on the agree category. There were no significant gender differences. Looking at age as the variable, no significance was found. Twenty-six respondents out of 67 in the middle group, that is between the ages of 36 and 48, strongly agreed. This indicates that this age group has very little knowledge about this issue. This is difficult to explain as, in the previous statement, they demonstrated more knowledge.

**Statement 3: ‘Children who have been sexually abused exhibit one or more of these behavioural symptoms: aggression, attention seeking, hyperactivity and disruption’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
64.6 %	17 %	18.4 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

The literature reviewed indicates that some children exhibit some symptoms, but not all. For instance, White *et al.*, (1989, cited in Rosenfeld, Nadelson, Krieger, & Backman, 1977) outline the symptoms mentioned above as signs of potential sexual abuse, and further state that they might be observable by a educator, parent or school nurse. Meier (1985) also reported that in his cases these signs were observed and based on specific documentation as described by children. This statement was significant ( $p=0.000$ ), which shows that many teachers have knowledge in this area. Looking at the percentages, 64% agreed, 17% were uncertain and 18.4% disagreed. This indicates that just over half of the sample of educators have knowledge of how to identify a sexually abused child. One would expect the majority of them to have this knowledge. Many workshops have been run for the educators, and observable symptoms such as the ones mentioned above are emphasized. It is concerning that 17% and 18.4%, which is equal to 35.4% of the sample, seem unaware of the behavioural indicators of emotional disturbances. There were no significant gender differences, but age, as a variable, was significant. The age group of 49 and above disagreed with the statement. This may mean that they have insufficient knowledge. Of concern is that older educators usually occupy positions of power within a school system. The danger in this is that younger educators may be frustrated in their efforts to bring about change in the system. Certainly this raises issues about educator training at the in-service level.

**Statement 4: ‘Children who have been sexually abused exhibit features of emotional/psychological instability such as poor self image, headaches, stealing, wetting and soiling, seductive behaviour and mood swings**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
83.6 %	8.2 %	8.2 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Summit and Kryso (1978, cited in Meier, 1985) state that no two children are identical which means no all-encompassing profile exists. The emotional signs mentioned above are some of the commonalities. In this study, results show that this statement was significant ( $p=0.000$ ) and looking at the frequencies, 83.6 % of the educators agreed; however, 8.2 % disagreed and another 8.2 % were not sure. This information is an indication that educators seem to agree that child sexual abuse is traumatic. Males and females seem to agree on this statement as there were no significant gender differences. Results also show that different age groups seem to agree on this statement.

**Statement 5: ‘Young children are more traumatized by abuse than older children’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
81 %	7.7 %	11.3 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Current evidence in this area seems inconclusive. Some studies have found no correlation with age (Tufts, 1984, cited in Sanderson, 1990). Most authors seem to agree that the number of stages of development that the abuse spans plays an important role in determining the extent of the impact. This differs from Conte *et al.*, (1991) who maintains that older children who are abused by fathers are at greater risk for mental health problems (Finkelhor, 1986).



For the purposes of this research, it is maintained that all abuse is traumatic and that age does not seem to be a factor. The most important factor is that each and every case is different. Duration, frequency, the nature of the sexual activity, and the relationship between the child and the perpetrator all add another dimension to the picture.

This statement was significant ( $p=0.000$ ), which shows that educators have knowledge. Looking at the frequencies, results show that 81 % of educators agreed, 7.7% were uncertain and 11.3% disagreed with this statement. This could mean that educators regard younger children as being more vulnerable and powerless and, therefore, more susceptible to trauma than older ones who can speak for themselves. In addition, educators and other members of the community, are continually shown through the media that the most targeted children are the younger ones. In South Africa there are more campaigns for children rights. One should not overlook the fact that this information indicates that educators do care, and are aware of how much trauma a child goes through when sexually abused. In all societies a child is seen as the responsibility of parents until a child develops that self-protective voice, and any violation of their rights is met with bitter feelings from the community. On the other hand, there is a danger that the community negates the older group who could suffer from the same traumatic effects as the little ones. Turning to the issue of gender, there was a significant difference between males and females. Most of the females agreed while males were less sure. Ninety-six females strongly agreed and fourteen males agreed. This indicates how important it is for educators to be trained through in-service training, which should emphasize the trauma of child abuse for older children as well. Age as a variable was not significant.

**Statement 6: ‘Children who are abused by their fathers are at less risk for psychosocial problems than children abused by strangers’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
18.1 %	19.4 %	62.5 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Clinical observation indicates that the closer the relationship between abuser and abused, the more traumatic the impact of child sexual abuse (Russell, 1986; Finkelhor, 1979). Again contradictory evidence exists with other studies (Hoagwood, cited in McDonogh, 1994), commenting on the high risk of trauma when non-family members are involved, suggested that while long-term effects of incestuous relationships are severe, non-relative cases also warrant attention. Greater damaging effects are reported following sexual abuse by father or father figure (Russel, 1986). These discrepant findings suggest that the relationship of the child to the abuser is not a constant predictor of severity of trauma. Sanderson (1990) further notes that one reason for this may be that closeness of relationship is not necessarily a reflection of degree of betrayal experienced by the abused child. The dynamics are different between a trusted person and the stranger, with the former generating betrayal of trust and the latter serving to induce more fear.

This statement was significant ( $p=0.000$ ), and looking at the percentages, results show that 62.5 % disagreed, 19.4 % were uncertain and 18.1 % strongly agreed with this statement. This could mean that just a little over half of the educators are aware of the fact that all abuse is traumatic whether by a family member or stranger and it can have damaging effects. Educators in a school situation encounter different problems related to abuse and generally are not in a position to know who the offender is (stranger or father). Their response could indicate that they know all abuse is traumatic. Looking at the other responses, 19.4 % and 18.1 % of the educators showed non-agreement. This is cause for concern mainly because they come across children with these experiences in their classes and may underestimate the impact

of the abuse. This information is also supportive of in-service training for educators focusing especially on appropriate responses to children’s concerns. Neither gender nor age were significant.

**Statement 7: ‘The child is seductive and often responsible for arousal’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
8.3 %	36.8 %	54.9 %

Age: not significant  
 Gender: not significant

Browne and Finkelhor (1986) and Hall (1990) warn that the proposition that children are victims of their own sexual behaviour is a dangerous one. Murray and Parton (cited in Bentovim, 1988) have pointed out that adults have a duty to protect and to be responsible for children’s welfare. Finkelhor (cited in Bentovim *et al.* 1988) points out that the majority of sexual abuse is initiated by an adult. Again, this statement was significant ( $p=0.000$ ). Looking at the percentages, 54 % disagreed that the child is seductive. This could be indicative that educators are aware of that fact that the child is not responsible. However, it is important to note that 36.8% were uncertain. That is a very high proportion of educators who are not sure. In addition 8.3 % agreed that the child is seductive. Again this has implications for in-service training, especially as most educators were uncertain and some agreed with this statement. Educators need more information on the subject, especially on how to handle disclosure. There was no significant difference between males and females. Age was also not significant.

**5.2.1 Summary of knowledge statements**

Of the seven knowledge statements, two statements showed inadequate knowledge. On the whole, educators appear to have some understanding in certain areas, but in other areas additional information is required. Looking at the statements concerned with incest, it

appeared that educators' knowledge is insufficient. Older educators appeared to be lacking knowledge in this area. Looking at educators' knowledge in relation to developmental age, results revealed significant gender differences. More males suggested not being sure about the effects. These are difficult issues to grapple with and only people with the necessary theoretical background would respond appropriately to these issues.

It was revealing that in some statements which require some background knowledge in the area of child sexual abuse, educators responded well. This supports the notion that educators have some understanding in certain areas. However in other areas more information is required. Looking at the behavioural symptoms, more than half of the sample showed knowledge in this area. On the other hand, even though small in number, many children may be affected by a educator's lack of understanding. Differences in opinions of the different age groups was found, with the older group showing no understanding in this statement. An examination of the statement which considered emotional\psychological signs indicates that overall, educators are aware of the negative emotional and psychological effects of abuse. Educators seemed to be responding to the fact that all abuse is traumatic. One can argue that this does not necessarily reflect knowledge, but rather that educators are aware that all abuse is traumatic, which is positive. Just over half disagreed that a child is seductive. Important additional information seems to be required in this area considering the rest of the sample agreed with the statement. Such beliefs could lead to secondary traumatising of the child who discloses to a educator.

### **5.3 VALUE STATEMENTS**

One might argue that it is not only the event of sexual abuse that can produce stress reactions in the classroom. It is one's perception or attitude towards the event. Educators' attitudes towards the sexually abused children are examined. All the value statements were significant at the value of  $p=0.000$ , except for statement 9.

**Statement 8: ‘The most essential goal of victim treatment is to help victims express the feelings they have about victimization’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
73.1 %	17.2 %	9.7 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Literature reviewed highlights that children rarely tell anyone, especially when first assaulted (Finkelhor, 1979 cited in Meier, 1985). This indicates that a child may feel bad and deserving of punishment. Respondents indicated a high level of agreement with this statement. About 73.1% valued the treatment goal of the victim being able to express feelings about victimization, 17.2% were uncertain and 9.7% disagreed with the statement. This might indicate that educators are aware that the effects of child sexual abuse may warrant further psychological intervention. However, it is disturbing to see that 27% of educators are not sure about this issue. Previous research has shown that students in black schools are likely to remain in classes with emotional problems going undetected (Rundell, 1995). Age and gender as variables were not significant in this statement.

**Statement 9: ‘The mothers of victims of sexual abuse should apologize to their children for failure to protect them.’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
34.7 %	22.9 %	42.4 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Literature indicates that marital discord and sexual estrangement from the marital partner may render the child vulnerable. This places a lot of responsibility on the mother for colluding through failure to fulfil the sexual needs and duties required by the spouse (Meiselman, 1978;

Johnson *et al.*, 1990; Spies, 1994). Hooper (1992) states that all children are vulnerable to adults to some extent, and no child is supervised all the time. About 42.4 % strongly disagree, 22.9 % were uncertain and 34.7 % strongly agree with this statement. A significant value of  $p=0.017$  was found, which is weak. These results are controversial which links up with the current evidence about the role of the mother. It could be that educators are also confused by the role a mother plays. On the other hand, believing that mothers collude in the sexual abuse of their daughters puts a lot of blame on the mother. Mothers may even be punished by removal of the child from their care. Other authors look at the maintaining factors instead of the causal factors in terms of the role of the mother (Masson & O'Bryne, 1990, cited in Hooper, 1992). A limitation of the questionnaire was not giving respondents a chance to give their reasons. This statement attempted to assess educators' attitudes towards treatment. Looking at age and gender as variables, no significance was found.

**Statement 10:            ‘All victims of sexual abuse need treatment by a psychologist’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
88.9 %	4.2 %	6.9 %

Age:            not significant  
Gender:        not significant

Parents are often reluctant to seek treatment, expressing the fear that it will somehow hurt the child to repeat the details which have already been disclosed to police, social workers and so on. These results show that the respondents value this statement as 88.9 % strongly agree, 4.2 % were uncertain and 6.9 % strongly disagreed. This indicates that most educators are aware that victims may need treatment. There were no significant differences in terms of gender and age.

**Statement 11:**            ‘Once the perpetrator has apologized or confessed for the abuse the child should never be allowed to bring up the abuse in the discussion’

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
25.4 %	18.3 %	56.3 %

Age:            not significant  
Gender:        not significant

The question in this statement is mainly about how much opportunity to speak is offered to the child. Bentovim *et al.*, (1988) states that in many families the greatest amount of active discussion may be between the parents and health workers rather than the child. It is important to assess whether such discussions are relating to the children needs or to the parents. Of the respondents in this study, 56.3 % strongly disagreed, which is positive, 25,5 % strongly agree and 18.3 % were uncertain. These results indicate that not all educators value talking about the abuse in detail. One would expect all educators to be aware of the needs of the child to express feelings openly. Again this has implications for further training in this area to minimize secondary abuse of the child. There were no significant differences in gender or in terms of age.

**Statement 12:**            ‘In determining that a child has been sexually abused, it is a good idea to have the child directly confront the perpetrator’

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
20.3 %	20.3 %	59.4 %

Age:            not significant  
Gender:        significant

About 59.4% of the sample strongly disagree, 20.3 % were uncertain and 20.3 % strongly agreed with this statement. These results show that most of the educators were not in favour of confrontation. One can assume that many educators are used to abuse by strangers and not incest as explained by Bentovim *et al.*, (1988), in which case confrontation is not ideal.

Bentovim *et al.* (1988) look at this issue in terms of incest and dysfunctional families. Bentovim argues that a wide variety of dysfunctional family patterns have certain common characteristics. For instance, a lack of openness of communication of feelings held by individuals. In addition they look at it as denial, which means an uncertainty about the truth of anything. Bentovim further suggests that family interventions, for instance having an open discussion, are likely to be most effective in trying to alter dysfunctional families. This could be interpreted as an attempt to identify the problem through talking, which also confirms for the victim that the responsibility for the abuse lies at the father's door. About 40% indicate that it is a good idea to confront the perpetrator, but one is not certain whether this means confrontation with a stranger or the father. If it is the former, then there is cause for concern when one thinks about how many children could be subjected to confronting an abuser who is a stranger. There were no significant age differences but males and females seem to have differing opinions on the issue. More light may have been thrown on this issue if respondents were provided with the opportunity of stating the reasons underlying their response.

**Statement 13:            ‘If the child wants the abuse to remain secret it should not be reported’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
16.7%	16.7%	66.7%

Age:            not significant  
Gender:        significant

Literature shows that a fundamental necessity in furthering self-esteem for a child who has been sexually abused is for them to have their views and feelings heard and acknowledged as legitimate (Bentovim *et al.*, 1988; Meier, 1985; Hooper, 1992). It is postulated that a child may want the abuse to remain secret, and harbour the fear that no one is going to believe the story, or for fear of stigmatisation. To help develop a good self-esteem, a child needs assistance in talking about the issue. Keeping it as a secret creates further guilt and places more responsibility on the child. To prevent further abuse and to minimize long-term effects on the victim, a child should disclose. The results paint a confusing picture - 16.7% strongly



agree. 16.7% were uncertain and 66.7% strongly disagree (which is desirable). Furthermore, educators are obliged by law to report. It appears that a total 32% seem to have mixed feelings about the issue. The issue of sexual abuse still has a lot of stigma in the black community. There were no significant age and gender differences.

**Statement 14:        ‘If the perpetrator is a family member the child should not be allowed to return home’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
28 %	21.7 %	50.3 %

Age:            not significant  
Gender:        not significant

Most sexually assaulted children may require initial separation from both parents. The decision to return the child home is a difficult one. White *et al.* (1989) maintain that reunification must be carefully monitored to protect the child from slipping back. In this study results show a division among the educators’ attitudes: 50.3% strongly disagree, 28.0% strongly agree and 21.7% were uncertain. Half of the sample seem to disagree that a child should not be allowed to return home even if the perpetrator is a family member. One possible explanation could be that many people believe that the perpetrator needs to be removed from the home and not the child. Jones *et al.* (1984, cited in Bentovim, 1988) in his study of professional attitudes, warns that professionals need to be aware that strong feelings aroused in themselves arise from a process of identification with the feelings and attitudes in the child or family. They further suggest that this process underlies the need for professionals to have adequate training so that feelings aroused in themselves do not inhibit sensitive work with the family or become projected negatively onto either the child or the perpetrator in an overly protective or punitive way. The point with regard to this study is that half the educators seem to value keeping the family together as opposed to separation, while the other half seem to value removal of the child. Clearly this issue arouses mixed reactions from educators. There were no significant gender and age differences.

Statement 15: ‘Perpetrators need to be prosecuted in the legal system’

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
85.4 %	2.1 %	12.5 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

In South Africa an alleged sexual offence is reported to the police or another professional agency who, in turn, reports it to the police. There is an obligation to pursue investigations into the allegations and there will be a process of evidence gathering, which is a very long process. However, in most cases there is no forensic evidence and convictions do not occur. Given this background, the majority of educators (85.4 %) supported the legal system. However, 12.5 % strongly disagreed and 2.1 % were uncertain of this statement. It could be that in the black community a legal intervention may be overwhelming. The fear of stigmatization and long court proceedings may decide educators against this route. There were no significant age and gender differences.

Statement 16: ‘Perpetrators need treatment by a psychologist’

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
69 %	12.4 %	18.6 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Tranter *et al.* (1988, cited in Bentovim *et al.*, 1988) state that perpetrators who acknowledge the abuse and are willing to stop the abuse have a better prognosis than those who either fail to admit the abuse immediately or who make admissions which they subsequently retract. This highlights the fact that some perpetrators can be helped to deal with the abuse issue and therefore prevent further abuse. About 69 % of the sample seem to value the notion that perpetrators should see a psychologist. 12.4 % were uncertain and 18.6 % strongly disagree with the statement. Results indicate that not all educators see treatment by a psychologist as the appropriate intervention for the perpetrators. However, a large number seem to value a

curative approach. Again this shows that educators need to be aware of the dynamics of child sexual abuse and that there are agencies which can help perpetrators deal with their problems. Age and gender was not significant.

**Statement 17:**            **‘Testifying in court is always going to be traumatic for the child’**

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
71 %	18.6 %	10.3 %

Age:            not significant  
Gender:        not significant

It is of interest to remember that within our legal system the alleged perpetrator is regarded as innocent until proved guilty. The word of the child alone is insufficient to prosecute the alleged offender. Therefore a child is expected to go to court to be cross-examined in respect of the allegations. In terms of the results in this study, 71 % of the respondents agreed that testifying in court will always be traumatic for the child. It was revealing that educators are aware of these issues. Both males and females showed no difference of opinions. Different age groups appeared to have no different attitudes.

**5.3.1 Summary of value statements**

Overall, educators seem to have informed attitudes and values about child sexual abuse. For instance, 73.1 % of the educators valued the treatment goal of the victim being able to express feelings about victimization. Statements looking at the value of treatment for the abused child showed that most educators value treatment. Turning to issues of disclosure, and allowing the child to bring up the abuse in discussion, educators largely supported this notion. Statement 12, looking at confronting the perpetrator, was significant in term of gender. More females agreed that the child should directly confront the perpetrator. Educators seem to be divided on the issue of whether the child should be allowed to return home. This is a difficult issue and more investigation is required. Prosecution in the legal system seemed to be favoured. The majority of educators also agreed that perpetrators need treatment. Statement 17 which considered the legal system and its traumatic impact on the child, indicated that a large

number of educators are of the opinion that the legal system is going to be traumatic for the child. It should, however, be emphasized that minority attitudes should be addressed, as one educator may have an impact on many children's lives.

5.4 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Educators were asked to respond to what best represents the extent to which the statement describes what they would do to handle the problem. All the statements were significant at the value of  $p=0.000$ .

*Tell other educators:*

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
49.3 %	11 %	39.7 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Recommended systems for managing child sexual abuse vary. Tranter *et al.* (1988, cited in Bentovim, 1988) state that if a professional has a suspicion of child sexual abuse he should not keep that to himself but should consult with colleagues about how best to manage it. About 49.3% of the sample strongly agree, 11% were uncertain and 39.7% disagree. Educators have mixed feelings about the issue. One possible reason is that it may not be beneficial for the child in a school system. These results highlight the importance of schools' policies. What to do should be agreed upon by all staff members and should be implemented accordingly.

***Counsel the child:***

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
85.2 %	7.4 %	7.4 %

Age: not significant  
 Gender: not significant

Looking at the results, a significant value of  $p=0.000$  was found. Turning to the frequencies, 85.2 % recommended counselling the child and this is positive, 7.4 % were uncertain and 7.4 % disagreed. Again this has implications for further training to help educators have the skills to deal with disclosure effectively. It is important to note that educators appear to be willing to engage in counselling the child.

***Report to professionals:***

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
87.5 %	4.4 %	8.1 %

Age: not significant  
 Gender: not significant

This statement was significant ( $p=0.000$ ) and turning to frequencies, largely (87.5 %) educators would report to professionals. Only a small number (4.4 %) indicated uncertainty and 8.1 % disagreed with this recommendation. Again this could indicate that educators are aware that professionals need to intervene. On the other hand, some educators would not refer to professionals. Bentovim *et al.* (1988) reports that if there are no guidelines the area of discretion in reporting can lead to a decision not to, through fear of the consequences for the child and the family. This is not always in the best interests of the child. Clear guidelines following disclosure or in cases of suspected abuse should assist educators in managing the situation. There were no significant age and gender differences.

*Report to police:*

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
73.4 %	17 %	9.6 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Many educators seem to be aware that reporting to police is important, 73.4 % agreed. A significant value of  $p=0.000$  was found. However, 17 % were uncertain and 9.6 % disagreed. However, 23 % showed mixed feelings. The absence of guidelines could account for this.

*Do nothing:*

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
2.3 %	2.3 %	95.4 %

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

It is interesting that 95.4 % said ‘NO’, something should be done. This information links up with responses about whether the abuse should be kept secret. It seems as if educators are aware of their obligation to report; however, 4 % seem to disagree. This raises concern as to how many cases can end up not being reported. The safety and welfare of the child is the first priority and educators are expected to act accordingly. This raises issues around policy. A child-centred policy is vital for the management of sexual abuse. Age and gender was not significant.

*Confront the perpetrator:*

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
21.8%	25.6%	52.6%

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

The question ‘would you confront the perpetrator immediately after the child has disclosed’?, assumed that educators would be aware that the matter still needed further investigation. Half the sample (52.6%) strongly disagreed, 25.6% were uncertain and 21.8% agreed with the recommendation. Guidelines to give direction to educators as to what is appropriate and what is not, are obviously needed.

*Report to parents:*

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
85.2%	7.4%	7.4%

Age: not significant  
Gender: not significant

Parents play an important role in the management of child sexual abuse cases. Results show that 85.2% would report to parents. Those who disagree (7.4%) and those who were uncertain (7.4%) may have reflected on the possibility of the parent being the perpetrator.

*Keep as a secret:*

AGREE	UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE
13.9%	5.1%	81.0%

Age: not significant  
 Gender: not significant

Eighty-one percent strongly disagree, 5.1% were uncertain and 13.9% strongly agreed with this statement. Again, it is concerning that 19% would potentially not report. It appears, however, that the large majority of educators are aware that abuse should not be concealed. Educators also need to know that they are obliged by law to report all abuse.

**5.4.1 Summary**

In conclusion, in most instances educators are aware of their obligations to the abused child. But only 73.4% of the sample would report to police. One must emphasize that all professionals dealing with abuse are obliged by law to report. Looking at the management of the cases, 85.2% indicated they would counsel the child. This again emphasizes the role of in-service training to equip educators with counselling skills. Results also show that 13.9% would keep the abuse secret. Importantly, 95.4% disagreed with the ‘do nothing’

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## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study assumes that educators play a very important role in children's lives. Therefore, a positive attitude and information on issues relating to child sexual abuse is required for the effective management of these situations in schools.

This research has demonstrated that the majority of educators have some understanding in certain areas but additional information is required. A small number of educators still demonstrate a lack of awareness in crucial areas. This small number of educators may however, affect a large number of children. The older group of educators appeared to be lacking some information on incest but in other areas demonstrated more knowledge. The majority of educators were also aware of the traumatic impact of abuse and were aware of the emotional and psychological indicators.

Knowledge in the area of incest seems to be lacking and educators do not seem to have the background information about child sexual abuse. For instance in response to Statement 2, 'Very few incest offenders have sex with children to whom they are not related, only 34.9% of the sample disagreed. It is also concerning to see that some educators believe myths surrounding sexual abuse. For instance only 54.9% disagreed that the child was seductive. It is also important to highlight that there was a significant gender difference in relation to the developmental age of the child, with more men suggesting they were not sure about the effects. This also indicates an area where knowledge is lacking. Overall, it was rather pleasing that most educators have some knowledge in the area of child sexual abuse. However, there still appears to be a need for training to help educators acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to be effective in this area.

Educators seem to show a positive attitude in the area of child sexual abuse. Commonalities in term of gender and age were also revealed in this category. Largely, educators seem to value treatment of the victim. Most agreed that the most essential goal of victim treatment

is to help victims express feelings they have about victimization. Educators showed mixed feelings about the role of mothers. Concerning the perpetrator, a punitive approach seemed to be valued by the educators. Educators appeared to value prosecution of the perpetrator in the legal system. However, testifying in court was seen as traumatic for the child. It is interesting to note that 69% agreed that perpetrators need treatment by a psychologist. A large majority of educators disagreed with the idea that abuse should be kept secret. This is positive and it shows that educators have a positive attitude which can be built on. Gender differences were revealed in few areas.

Different groups tend to recommend different interventions in cases of child sexual abuse. In this study there were no significant gender or age differences. Educators were, however, divided on how they should proceed. Reporting to other educators was particularly debatable, reporting to other professionals was less so. While many (73.4%) would report to police, ideally all should. Almost all the educators disagreed on the 'Do Nothing' recommendation and many were in favour of counselling. These results seem to support the assumption that many educators are sensitive to the needs of the children but may not know how to proceed with management. There seems to be a need to have 'laid down' procedures that every educator could follow.

## **6.1 LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

It should be noted that the classification of items was based on the author's understanding of the literature. New data may influence the classification of items differently. The procedure of using a sample from the Edendale area alone limits the generalizability of this study's findings to all educators in the black community. The use of the questionnaire without asking educators to give their reasons limited the scope of the study. It was difficult to assess what meaning to attach to minority responses. Males were under-represented in this sample and generalizations are thus questionable.

Overall, the decision to follow Conte *et al.*'s (1991) design may have limited the scope of the questions posed. It is problematic to assume that educators would have been exposed to the issues of child sexual abuse in the same way as mental health professionals may have been.

On the positive side, the questionnaire was useful in revealing the areas in which additional training may be required. It also revealed that a small number of educators were clearly uninformed about some areas. Bearing in mind the importance of educators in this area, this situation should be remediated.

## 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This study revealed that educators need some knowledge in certain areas. Creating forums to discuss these issues may allow educators to share information and to give support to each other.
2. In-service training needs to focus on counselling skills and procedures for managing cases of child sexual abuse.
3. A life-skills approach in the classroom for the prevention and empowerment of the learners is recommended. Apart from the formal education that learners receive at school, they also need information about skills they can use outside school.
4. Indications from the research findings related to age differences suggest that further research is required in this area. Do the attitudes of older educators differ in significant ways from those of the younger educators? If that is the case, special attention may need to be paid to older educator's attitudes.
5. Communities should be included in prevention programmes. The school could serve as a focal point which will potentially unite the community in the fight against abuse.
6. This study also suggests that there are certain issues that may have gender differences in attitudes and values. A further investigation in this area is required. This study had few males in the group thus making generalisations difficult.

7. In the area of attitudes, this study showed that the role of mothers is complex. Further investigation is needed in order to inform educators about community attitudes. Historically, mothers are regarded as the protectors of children, but urbanization has made this a difficult task.
8. Cross-cultural studies in this area need more attention. The diversity of the South African cultural milieu is often the context in which most management of child sexual abuse takes place. Westernized legal systems are sometimes at odds with traditional ways. Procedures for managing abuse need to be cognisant of this context. Schools and communities need to agree on what should be done.
9. Rural communities are more often than not under resourced. Involvement of rural communities allows us to reach out to those who are not aware of the available resources. Giving them a voice will allow them to contribute towards the alleviation of the problem. These educators could form teams in their own schools. They could elect a representative to meet with other educators in urban areas.
10. The area of offender management is a sorely neglected one. It would be interesting to find out what community attitudes for the management of perpetrators are. Growing numbers of adolescent perpetrators makes this a serious issue. Once again life-skills programmes for learners may have an impact on preventing abuse.
11. A multidisciplinary approach is advocated. This would help promote collaboration between services in order to improve communication. The management of child sexual abuse is a complex issue requiring the cooperation of health, welfare, education and legal personnel.
12. School policies on how to manage child sexual abuse are imperative. The involvement of the community is also vital. Ideally, agreement should be reached as to how to proceed and what role schools will play in the procedure. While educators may be legally responsible for reporting, this is not enough. They also need to know what procedures to follow in the event of a disclosure. Educators are motivated to help but require guidance on how to help.

### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that educators have knowledge in some areas of child sexual abuse. However, in other areas more information is required. Furthermore, the results of this study largely support the recommendation that educators need in-service training in specific areas. Educators seem to know what is required of them but are not always clear as to what should be done. Laid-down procedures would be very useful in the management of child sexual abuse. **All** educators need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of sexual abuse. In addition, educators need to know that the law requires them to **report** child sexual abuse cases. In this study it was found that a small percentage of educators did not have this knowledge and seemed to be influenced by attitudes that may not be helpful to the child. Small numbers of educators affect large numbers of children. Ongoing efforts to remedy this situation are vital. In the face of escalating statistics of child sexual abuse, every effort should be made to sensitize all educators to the rights of children.

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## APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Table III. Professionals' Agreements with Child Sexual Abuse Statements

	Agree	Disagree	Neither	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
<b>Knowledge Statements</b>					
1. Almost all adults who have sex with children were themselves abused as children	65	11	24	2.2	1.03
2. Adults who have sex with children are either fixated or regressed offenders	49	17	34	2.6	1.01
3. Adults who have sex with children have a common or typical psychological profile	40	37	23	3.0	1.16
4. Very few incest offenders have sex with children to whom they are not related	37	42	21	3.1	1.20
5. Children who have been sexually abused almost always exhibit one or more of the "core symptoms"; such as behavioral regression, nightmares, somatic complaints, acting out	14	68	18	3.8	1.06
6. Young children are more traumatized by abuse than older children	11	66	23	3.8	1.00
7. Children who are abused by their fathers are at less risk for psychosocial problems than children abused by strangers	2	94	4	4.6	0.71
<b>Value Statements</b>					
1. The most essential goal of victim treatment is to help victims express the feelings they have about victimization	64	12	24	2.3	0.97
2. Self-help support groups are an essential component of the treatment of incest families	60	14	27	2.3	1.04
3. Incest victims' mothers should apologize to their daughters for their failure to protect	59	14	27	2.4	1.10
4. Almost all child victims of	45	27	29	2.7	1.21

Table III. Continued

	Agree	Disagree	Neither	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
psychotherapy to help them recover from the experience					
5. Psychophysiological assessment of sexual arousal through the penile plethysmograph is extremely important in determining the arousal of adult sexual offenders	26	25	50	3.0	.99
6. The decision to prosecute should be based on the child victim's wishes	10	68	22	3.9	1.01
7. In determining that a child has been sexually abused, it is a good idea to have the child directly confront the alleged perpetrator	6	80	15	4.2	0.94
8. Once an incest father has apologized for the abuse, his daughter should never be allowed to bring the abuse up because she is likely to use it as a weapon against the family	1	96	4	4.7	0.59
Uncertain Statements					
1. Sexual offenders who only receive prison sentences are likely to reoffend	82	8	10	1.7	1.05
2. Incest is primarily the sexual expression of nonsexual needs	76	10	15	2.1	0.99
3. Incest is a problem with origins in family relationships	68	13	19	2.2	1.05
4. Mothers of incest victims are almost universally victims of sexual abuse themselves	44	22	33	2.7	1.00
5. Testifying in court is always going to be traumatic to children	43	34	23	2.8	1.25
6. Most incest fathers are sexually aroused to children	29	39	32	3.1	1.05

Table III. Continued

	Agree	Disagree	Neither	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
7. Incest is a problem with origins in the individual psychopathology of mothers, daughters, and fathers	27	42	31	3.3	1.14
8. Removal of victims or offenders is more traumatic than keeping the family together	16	54	30	3.6	1.08
9. Adults who have sex with children are generally untreatable	12	70	18	3.9	1.06
10. Once incest is disclosed, it is unlikely to happen again	6	87	8	4.3	0.86

<sup>a</sup>Average responses reported; 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree. Strongly agree and agree were collapsed into one category of agree, and strongly disagree and disagree were collapsed into one category of disagree. Mean is based on uncollapsed category.

Table VI. Therapeutic Treatment Recommendation by Relationship of Offender: Percentage Choosing Treatment First or Second

Therapy Choices	Father	Brother	Teacher
Individual therapy—victim	59	55	61
Group therapy—victim	38 <sup>a</sup>	23	49
Family group therapy	23 <sup>a</sup>	48	11
Individual therapy—offender	15 <sup>a</sup>	36	19
Group therapy—offender	34 <sup>a</sup>	16	20
Behavioral treatment offender	9 <sup>a</sup>	5	30
Home monitoring	15 <sup>a</sup>	17	3
Mother/daughter counseling	8	4	11

<sup>a</sup> $p < .01$ .

APPENDIX B: EDUCATORS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

ALL ANSWERS WILL BE CONSIDERED HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL.

*Biographical information:*

Name of the school . . . . .  
. . . . .

Age . . . . .

Parent or non-parent . . . . .

Sex . . . . .

No of completed years in teaching profession . . . . .



## CASE SUMMARY

A pupil in your class reports that someone caressed his or her body on many occasions, rubbing his or her chest and genitals and forced him or her to perform oral sex. His or her academic performance is at standard level although less than expected for a child as bright as she is.

- \* Choose the number that best describes your feelings.
- \* There are no right or wrong answers.
- \* Put a cross (x) over your one chosen number.
- \* The numbers are rated as follows 1 to 5, with

1 being strongly agree (SA)

2 being agree (A)

3 being uncertain (UN)

4 being disagree (D)

5 being strongly disagree (SD)

	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1. Almost all adults who have sex with children were themselves abused as children.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Very few incest offenders (i.e those who sexually abuse their own children) have sex with children to whom they are not related.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit one or more of these behavioural symptoms such as aggression, attention-seeking, hyperactivity and disruption.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Children who have been sexually abused exhibit features of emotional/psychological instability such as poor self image, headaches, stealing, wetting, soiling, seductive behaviour and mood swings.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Young children are more traumatised by abuse than older children.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Children who are abused by their fathers are at less risk for psychosocial problems than children abused by strangers.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The child is seductive and often responsible for arousal, if it happened the child was asking for it.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The most essential goal of victim treatment is to help victims express the feelings they have about victimization.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The mothers of victims of sexual abuse should apologise to their children for their failure to protect.	1	2	3	4	5
10. All victims of sexual abuse need treatment by a psychologist.	1	2	3	4	5

11. Once the perpetrator has apologised or confessed for the abuse it is a good idea to have the child directly confront the perpetrator.	1	2	3	4	5
12. In determining whether that a child has been sexually abused, it is a good idea to have the child directly confront the perpetrator.	1	2	3	4	5
13. If the child wants the abuse to remain secret it should not be reported.	1	2	3	4	5
14. If the perpetrator is a family member the child should not be allowed to return home.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Perpetrators of child sexual abuse need to be prosecuted in the legal system.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Perpetrators need treatment by a psychologist.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Testifying in court is always going to be traumatic for the child.	1	2	3	4	5

For each of the following statements rate what best represents the extent to which the statement describes what you would do to handle the problem.

	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1. Tell other educators	1	2	3	4	5
2. Counsel the child	1	2	3	4	5
3. Report to professionals	1	2	3	4	5
4. Report to police	1	2	3	4	5
5. Do nothing	1	2	3	4	5
6. Confront the perpetrator	1	2	3	4	5
7. Report to parents	1	2	3	4	5
8. Keep as a secret	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH

## **APPENDIX C: CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE STUDY**

### **The scope and purpose of the study**

Teachers are considered to be among those who are well placed for the detection and prevention of child sexual abuse, yet very little attention has been paid to teachers' knowledge, attitudes and management recommendations. In recent years a number of preventative programmes for use in the schools have been developed. These programmes are run by non governmental organizations and child welfare's. However there is no school policy from the departmental level regarding education of teachers yet the state mandates that suspected child sexual abuse be reported to professionals.

According to the South African Survey (1994\1995) more than 44 % of victims of abuse did not receive counselling. Victims were also not likely to receive adequate therapy. A proper police investigation or a fair trial. It was also apparent for the researcher that research on teacher attitudes about child sexual abuse, knowledge, familiarity with reporting procedures and the legal process is limited. In addition , while one is aware of research that has been conducted into numerous aspects of child sexual abuse little is known about the South African black community. In South Africa there is an added socio-  
- historical perspective which needs to be considered when studying this area.

The national data on the high incidence of child abuse, and the teachers' obligation to report such cases, the fact that few cases are reported by teachers, the unique South African cultural background, and lack of local research in the area demands that something be done. Based on the above, this study investigated the attitudes, knowledge and the management recommendations of a group of black South African teachers.

This study can be criticized on a number of grounds. These will be dealt with under the following headings: the scope of literature review, the concepts attitudes and values, extent of educators' knowledge, the emotive nature of the research area, management

recommendations, gender issues, methodology acknowledging its limitations and the critical evaluation of the investigation and its limitations.

### **The concepts, values and attitudes**

The study explored the international literature in the area as one might argue that this was imperative for an understanding of the topic and the development of the researcher. However, for the purposes of this study, recent literature on teacher attitudes should have been explored in greater depth. The existing research, which were mainly conducted abroad, highlight the view that if we are to change the escalating rate at which abuse occur, looking at attitudes that contribute to the spread of abuse is of fundamental importance (McIntyre, 1987; Hazzard & Rupp, 1986; Nightingale & Walker, 1986; Paulson, 1983).

Johnson (1994), in his study concerning teachers' role in the primary prevention of child sexual abuse, found that barriers at the implementation stage were due to personal beliefs and attitudes, and that teachers' feelings need to be addressed in any school-based primary prevention initiative. An attempt to educate teachers without looking at their attitudes is doomed to failure. This study highlights the need to look at teacher attitudes in the area of sexual abuse.

Levin (1983) found that teachers felt a strong personal responsibility and moral obligation to report suspected child abuse but lacked knowledge in the area. Levin (1983) proposed that it was lack of detection of child abuse that led to a low rate of reporting amongst teachers. This study aimed at looking at attitudes and knowledge. A criticism of the questionnaire used is that it contained a section on values. The literature on values was not explored. This confusion could be based on the fact that the researcher adapted an existing questionnaire and failed to separate the aims of this study from those of the original. In this study values and attitudes were treated as one. It is debatable whether this is a justifiable assumption.

## **Knowledge**

Hazzard and Rupp (1986) found that teachers and college students were the least knowledgeable amongst a group of professional child workers, including pediatricians and mental health professionals. Knowledge was related significantly to the amount of professional education and experience with abuse cases. This study further highlights that the more knowledgeable the teachers were the more likely they were to show interest in the area and to report more cases. Again too much focus was given to the original questionnaire in this study. The area of sexual abuse is broad and there is a danger of losing sight of the original question. The researcher discovered the importance of keeping a balance between the aims of her own study and those of the original upon which it was based. For an inexperienced researcher, a standardised abuse-related questionnaire to assess knowledge is recommended.

## **Emotive nature of the research area**

McIntyre (1990) found that teachers fail to report cases of child abuse despite mandatory reporting laws, mainly because they do not believe they have seen a case of child abuse in their classroom and would require very obvious signs to recognize it. This study also highlights the importance of research on the amount of knowledge teachers' possess about sexually abused children. Recommendations should be based on the actual findings of the study, and not on assumptions. The researcher now realises that this is very difficult to do, as it is a very emotive area in which to do research.

## **Management recommendations**

Based on the rising number of sexually abused children who do not receive adequate intervention management, other recommendations were also examined. Some of these were based on assumptions. For instance, it was assumed that because of the absence of policies, there are no laid down procedures in the schools (for instance how to go about



reporting). In keeping with the international community, some basic information still needs to be collected in this country before such assumptions can be made.

### **Gender issues**

This study looked at differences between male and female teachers. It should be noted that more attention should have been given to international literature in this area. For example, Carroll and Fromuth (1993) studied gender differences and discovered that female subjects in the area of child sexual abuse did see the experience resulting in more negative effects than did their male counterparts. In addition Krulewitz (1987), Rumsey and Rumsey (1977) and Selby, Calhoun and Brock (1977) (cited in Levett 1990) explain that both male and female children are vulnerable to sexual molestation, but men and women are clearly differently situated in respect to threat of sexual assault. Thus differences may be expected in attitudes towards rape, although in most studies findings have been inconsistent. This study also aimed to examine differences between males and females and found no significant differences. These results were difficult to interpret as so few of the sample were male.

## **METHODOLOGY, ACKNOWLEDGING ITS LIMITATIONS**

### **The sample**

The author conducted a survey of teachers from ten schools situated in the Edendale area. The sample was not randomly drawn. Respondents were chosen on the basis of availability. Data was gathered from the nearest schools. In this study the sample was small. Sample size makes it difficult to find significant results. This cannot be said to be representative of teachers in general. Another limitation in this study is that there were very few males in the sample which makes it difficult to tackle the question of gender differences. Another reason for the disproportionate gender is the fact that there are very few male teachers in primary schools.

## **The questionnaire**

A questionnaire limits the researcher's chances of acquiring more information and explanations for their responses. Interviews and vignettes are recommended for more information and grounded responses.

In this study a questionnaire based on Conte, Fogarty and Collins' (1991) study was adapted to suit the South African context. This ultimately was a handicap and as it made the question of relevance difficult to answer. Questionnaires need to be designed for local purposes. It is recommended that other sources of information be used for the creation of the questionnaire's, for instance, newspaper reports, conference proceedings, teachers' forums, South African journal articles and the information from workshops run by different social services. A standardised questionnaire as mentioned earlier is another option.

In this study the researcher ran a pilot study. The pilot study was done for timing and to check the suitability of language. It is felt that the pilot study could have been used to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

The internal consistency or reliability of the questionnaire was assessed retrospectively and found to be low to moderate (0.48). This means that it may not have adequately captured the information being sought. The reliability scale for the entire questionnaire was (0.60). It should however be noted that a chi-square test was chosen to analyse the data. The nature of the data did not entirely meet the assumptions for a parametric analysis.

## **CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE INVESTIGATION AND ITS FINDINGS**

In retrospect, the reporting of the study's results was confusing. Tables of results were presented, many of which were difficult to discuss. Where results were discussed, percentages were used. This led to an overly inclusive discussion of the results. Statistically significant statements only should have been discussed to avoid confusion. In retrospect the most important results were:

### **Knowledge**

Although the sample size was small, results of this study are very important. Results show that teachers have some knowledge in the area of child sexual abuse. Participants were able to identify emotional and behavioural signs in the classroom. Teachers are aware of the potential impact of abuse on the child. Teachers did not hold the child responsible for the abuse. One potential barrier to knowledge was in the area of incest. Results show that teachers have insufficient information about this aspect of abuse.

Looking at gender differences, only one statement was significant. More females agreed that young children are more traumatised by abuse than older children as compared to their males counterparts. However, the disproportionate gender sample limits the validity of these results. Turning to age, only one statement was significant. The middle group (37 to 48) showed more knowledge in the area of behavioural symptoms.

## **Attitudes**

Results indicate that teachers have a positive attitude towards intervention. For instance, many agreed that a child needs to be treated by a psychologist, that abuse should not be kept secret, that the child is not responsible for arousal and that perpetrators should be prosecuted. Teachers are also aware that court proceedings are traumatic for the child. Significant gender differences were also noted in the values category. More females seem to value that a child directly confront the perpetrator.

## **Management recommendations**

Results show that teachers would tell other teachers about the abuse, counsel the child, report to professionals, report to police, report to parents, would not keep abuse secret and they would not do nothing. These results show that teachers know of some procedures, even if informally. The importance of laid down procedures should not be underestimated.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In this study teachers had some knowledge in the area of child sexual abuse. Teachers are concerned about sexual abuse. In addition, teachers are aware of what needs to be done in the area of intervention.